

NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

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THESIS

PROFESSIONALISM IN THE TURKISH MILITARY: HELP OR HINDRANCE TO CIVILIAN CONTROL?

by

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September 2000

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HELP OR HINDRANCE TO CIVILIAN CONTROL**

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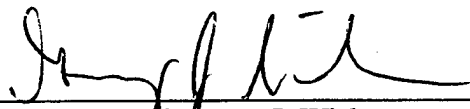
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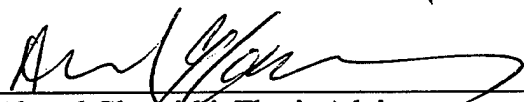
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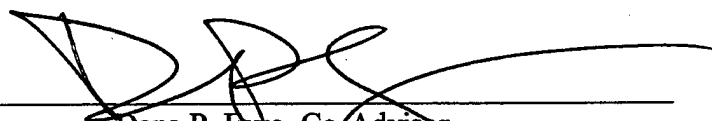


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ABSTRACT

The Turkish officer corps has developed into a professional body of personnel with a high degree of autonomy. Turkey's participation in NATO and the U.S. military assistance it received over the course of almost fifty years are key contributing factors to the modernization of the force. However, contrary to Samuel P. Huntington's proposition that maximizing military professionalism leads to objective civilian control of the military, the Turkish officer corps is not under civilian control and continues to play a major role in domestic politics.

The reason why the military is not under civilian control is that its definition of military professionalism differs from that normally attributed to Western militaries. The officer corps regards itself as the guardian of the ideology of Kemalism, named after Kemal Atatürk, the founder of modern Turkey. Rather than focusing exclusively on national defense, military officers are indoctrinated in and become occupied with the preservation of Kemalism against internal threats such as political Islam and Kurdish separatism. Although the adoption of Atatürk's example as a great strategist and military leader lends itself to military professionalism, adherence to Kemalism as an ideology is a hindrance to objective civilian control.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Turkish military has intervened in domestic affairs on three occasions within the last forty years. The recent ousting of Islamist Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan from power in June 1997 was also attributed to substantial military influence through the vehicle of the National Security Council. This is an indication that the military elite has not accepted civilian control. Without the military under civilian control, Turkey's attempt to integrate with the West and to consolidate a democracy will be futile.

The Turkish officer corps has developed into a professional body of personnel with a high degree of autonomy. Turkey's participation in NATO and the U.S. military assistance it received over the course of almost fifty years are key contributing factors to the modernization of the force. However, contrary to Samuel P. Huntington's proposition that maximizing military professionalism leads to objective civilian control of the military, the Turkish officer corps is not under civilian control and continues to play a major role in domestic politics.

The reason why the military is not under civilian control is that its definition of military professionalism differs from that normally attributed to Western militaries. The officer corps regards itself as the guardian of the ideology of Kemalism, named after Kemal Atatürk, the founder of modern Turkey. Rather than focusing exclusively on national defense, military officers are indoctrinated in and become occupied with the preservation of Kemalism against internal threats such as political Islam and Kurdish separatism. Although the adoption of Atatürk's example as a great strategist and military leader lends itself to military professionalism, adherence to Kemalism as an ideology is a hindrance to objective civilian control.

Sustainment of the Kemalist ideology primarily occurs within the officer military education system. Officers are taught a Kemalist worldview which is dynamic and can be applied to daily life. This worldview stresses the indivisibility of the Turkish nation and the secular nature of its government. Current military struggles with internal threats are examples of the Turkish military's determination to preserve the principles of Kemalism within the Republic.

The Turkish military exercises a high degree of political autonomy as a result of its professionalism. It not only maintains its core professional values, but is also dominant in areas shared by the military and civilians or considered solely the realm of the civilians. Two examples of this are the role it plays in the domestic defense industry and its extraordinary influence in foreign affairs.

Although the officer corps has achieved a high degree of professionalism, its strict adherence to Kemalism causes it to be politicized and focus less on preparing for the eventuality of war. The example of Atatürk of a master strategist and military leader is an inseparable part of Turkish military tradition and should be maintained. However, the political ideology attributed to him does not belong in the military realm and undermines civilian control.

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. THE PROBLEM: CIVILIAN CONTROL OF THE MILITARY IN THE WESTERN SENSE

At the end of the Cold War a number of nations, particularly those of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, attempted the transition from authoritarian regimes to systems of government approximating Western democracies. This process included the depoliticization of the military in order to bring it under civilian control. The new leadership of these countries strove for integration in Western organizations such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Union (EU), in which civilian control of the military was assumed.¹ In 1999, Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic became NATO members in the first round of accession at a time when the 50th anniversary of the Alliance was being celebrated. At the time, other countries were already being considered for the next round of accession.

Unlike these countries, the Republic of Turkey had begun its transition much earlier, but still has not consolidated a democracy. The conditions under which it became a NATO member in February 1952 were promising. In the national elections of 1950 the Democrat Party (DP) soundly defeated the Republican Peoples Party (RPP), which had been in power since the founding of the Republic by Kemal Atatürk in 1923. This was a positive sign for multi-party politics. The Turkish armed forces were undergoing modernization at the time with the help of U.S. foreign aid and military advisors made

¹ Stefan Sarvas, "Professional Soldiers and Politics: A Case of Central and Eastern Europe," *Armed Forces & Society* 26 (1999): 102.

possible by the Truman Doctrine and, because active military officers had not been allowed to serve in government positions since 1924, the military was firmly under civilian control. As the “Turkish experiment in democracy”—a phrase coined by Feroz Ahmad—began, Turkey seemed to be well on its way to integration with the West.

Since the time that Turkey entered NATO up to the present it has experienced three military coups, all a result of the inability of the civilian governments of 1960, 1971 and 1980 to handle economic difficulties, factionalism and the polarization of the political left and right which resulted in domestic violence. Each time the military stepped in as the guardian of the nation and reestablished order before it turned the reins of government back over to the civilian leaders. As recently as June 1997 a fourth event occurred, which has been dubbed a “soft” or “mini-coup” that resulted in the removal of Islamist Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan from power.

During the Cold War, given the size of Turkey’s armed forces and the close proximity of the Soviet threat to NATO’s southeastern flank, other NATO members that were established industrial democracies could turn a blind eye to the extraparliamentary actions of the military in a modernizing country such as Turkey, as long as it was able to maintain domestic stability and fulfill the requirements of collective defense. In fact, in times of domestic turmoil, military takeover of the government was generally welcomed in countries like Turkey, if it brought about domestic stability and maintained NATO solidarity.² A military with a Western orientation was preferred to civilian rule by parties on the extreme left or right of the spectrum.

² See Mehmet Ali Birand, *The Generals’ Coup in Turkey: An Inside Story of 12 September 1980* (London: Brassey’s, 1987), 172.

Now that the monolithic Soviet threat to Western interests has dissipated and the need to bolster fledgling democracies—in which the military is oftentimes the most stable institution present—against the peril of communism is no longer required, the Western powers are paying more attention to democratization. Issues such as respect for human rights and the noninterference of the military in political matters are tied to foreign aid and arms transfer deals. In Turkey's case, continued military intervention in politics seriously endangers the seemingly endless quest for EU membership (and acceptance as a Western country) it has been pursuing since the early 1960s, when it applied for membership to the forerunner of the EU, the European Community (EC). In fact, one of the reasons cited as an obstacle to Turkey's acceptance into the EU as a full member is its failure to bring the military under civilian control.³ Even though the military has become demonstrably more professional in recent history, it still exercises a great deal of influence in the politics.

If, as Samuel Huntington maintains, maximizing military professionalism facilitates civilian control by making the military apolitical, then why is the Turkish military still involved in politics when it has clearly developed into a professional force with the assistance of the United States and through its participation in NATO? I argue that military professionalism in the Turkish armed forces, contrary to Huntington's proposition, is a hindrance to bringing the military under civilian control.

The difficulty lies in the Turkish military elite's definition of military professionalism, which differs from that commonly formulated for Western militaries.

³ Barry Buzan and Thomas Diez, "The European Union and Turkey," *Survival* 41 (1999): 48.

Although it is evident that the Turkish military has benefited from a substantial modernization effort of the armed forces and has increased the technical proficiency of its personnel to a degree that makes it the envy of its regional neighbors, the military is still reluctant to leave the political arena due to strict adherence to the Kemalist ideology it advocates as an essential element of military professionalism.

The military elite has assumed the ambiguous tasks of defending the nation against foreign aggressors, on the one hand, and of protecting the Republic Atatürk succeeded in establishing by stressing the unity of the Turkish nation and the secular nature of the government, on the other hand. In order to accomplish the first task the military must distance itself from politics and the affairs of state and concentrate on its primary mission: to win wars. In executing the second mission the upper echelons of the military become embroiled in politics by rejecting any form of political development or internal threat that runs counter to Kemalism.

The Turkish military's preservation of Kemalism presupposes its involvement in internal affairs. This condition undermines civilian control and can alienate the military from certain groups of society. In his description of how democracies control the military, Richard H. Kohn asserts: "Only in the direst of emergencies should military forces be used to secure internal order; they must see themselves, and be seen, as the guardians and not the oppressors of the people."⁴

Although the military accepts democracy in principle, it sets the limits of political activity by defining what it will and will not accept. Rather than concentrating on its

⁴ Richard H. Kohn, "How Democracies Control the Military," *Armed Forces & Society* 8, no. 4

mission of defending the country against external threat, the generals are focused on internal problems that they have taken upon themselves to resolve. Recent examples of this are the military's ongoing operations against the separatist threat of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in Turkey's southeast and its fight against political and radical Islam. Its struggle against the PKK serves to maintain the indivisibility of the Turkish nation and its fight against political Islam seeks to uphold the Kemalist principle of a secular state. The achievement of effective civilian control can only be realized if the officer corps, while maintaining the example of Atatürk as a great military leader as a part of its military tradition, refrains from using Kemalism as an ideology for determining the outcome of Turkey's uncertain political future. In short, the military is unwilling to accept any political formula that does not bear a resemblance to Kemalism.

My argument will be structured by first discussing military professionalism as characterized by Samuel Huntington in his seminal work *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations*, and how maximizing military professionalism contributes to "objective" civilian control. The unit of analysis I address when discussing military professionalism is the officer corps, because it is the professional nucleus of the military and the group ultimately responsible for the management of violence. Criticism of Huntington's proposition regarding objective civilian control will be examined in an attempt to view the Turkish case from all angles. As Claude E. Welch, Jr. astutely points out, "much of the discussion about professionalism—particularly that of Huntington—remains abstract, more persuasive

theoretically, than documented empirically.”⁵ Using curricula from institutions of military education and other empirical data, I will attempt to measure the degree of professionalism in the Turkish officer corps and determine its relationship to civilian control. Critical to this examination will be a discussion of the “new” professionalism of internal security and national development as distinguished from Huntington’s “old” professionalism of defense against an external threat.

A brief survey of civil-military relations in Turkey beginning with the founding of the Republic in 1923 will follow, in order to highlight key junctures in this relationship and draw comparisons with the present day situation. Key to this discussion will be the events that led up to the first military intervention in 1960, an event that defined the role of the military in politics to the present day. This will be followed by a look at the development of professionalism in the Turkish military from the perspective of recruitment, officer education and professional development, external assistance to the Turkish military, and modernization within the Turkish armed forces.

Finally, I will submit that substantial military influence in Turkey’s political affairs is a reality that is here to stay unless the military’s image of itself as the guardian of the secular Republic as an essential part of its military professionalism is removed. It is imperative that military professionalism, which should incorporate the example set by Atatürk as a great military leader without advocating a Kemalist ideology, should be maximized to protect the nation against threats to national security. It is not the role of the military as an institution to dictate what is in the best interest of the nation in which

⁵ Claude E. Welch, Jr., “Military Disengagement from Politics: Paradigms, Processes or Random Events,” *Armed Forces & Society* 18, no. 3 (1992): 327.

popular sovereignty theoretically exists. Charting the national course should be left up to competent political leaders as elected representatives of the people.

Given the radical reforms implemented by Atatürk as a means of realizing his goal of a Westernized secular state and the energy with which the military elite continues to pursue this goal, it would be appropriate to examine the nature of Turkish civil-military relations to determine what in the West would be seen as an acceptable amount of military influence in politics, since the notion of a completely apolitical military is more ideal than reality.⁶ The assumption here is that no theory has sufficient explanatory power to apply to civil-military relations for every country in the world.⁷ Applying a

Western model of civil-military relations such as Huntington's to the Turkish case is perhaps doing Turkey a disservice, since the West is associated with modernity and Western theories of civil-military relations tend to assume that a mature form of democracy exists in the countries being examined.

However, Huntington's theory seems to be the standard by which Western powers and international organizations judge the degree of civilian control that exists in a given country. Turkey, whose Ottoman past is inextricably linked to the Middle East, is still undergoing modernization. Its political institutions are still weak and the competence of many of its politicians is questionable. For this reason, the military has traditionally stepped into a power vacuum in order to correct the nation's course when Kemalism was in danger and has returned to the barracks once this has been accomplished. Typologies

⁶ Sam C. Sarkesian, John Allen Williams, and Fred B. Bryant, *Soldiers, Society, and National Security* (Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner, 1995), 17.

⁷ Metin Heper and Aylin Güney, "The Military and the Consolidation of Democracy: The Recent

of civil-military relations which label Turkey as a “military democracy”⁸ or characterize the military as “moderators” or “guardians”⁹ have a great deal of explanatory power; however, the rules by which Turkey will be judged if it is to achieve its goal of Westernization are rooted in objective civilian control and should therefore be used to examine the Turkish case.

During the Cold War Turkey had a number of things in its favor within the international community. The Truman Doctrine facilitated the provisions of military aid and advisors to assist in the modernization and professionalization of the military. Turkey became a member of NATO in February 1952 with the help of U.S. backing and its participation in the Korean War on the side of the United Nations forces. Although it was not accepted as a full member of the EC subsequent to its application in 1963, and since that time has been held at arm’s length by the EU, the EC’s successor, the door to full membership has nevertheless remained open to Turkey. The security environment of the Cold War dictated that Turkey be a bulwark against the communist threat along NATO’s southeastern flank. Turkey’s geopolitical importance was well known, particularly with respect to its control of the strategic Bosphorus and Dardenelles Straits, prizes much coveted by Russia, which sought a means of extending its maritime reach into the Mediterranean Sea. Throughout the Cold War right up to the present day the Turkish military is second only to the United States in size within NATO with 797,000

Turkish Experience,” *Armed Forces & Society* 26, no. 4 (2000): 635.

⁸ Mehran Kamrava, “Military Professionalization and Civil-Military Relations in the Middle East,” *Political Science Quarterly* 115, no. 1 (2000): 71.

⁹ William Hale, *Turkish Politics and the Military* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), 309-310.

personnel.¹⁰ It has figured significantly in NATO's collective defense plans for almost fifty years.

Domestic stability was regarded by Turkey's Western allies as critical to the prosecution of the Cold War, even if it required military intervention from time to time as a way of removing incompetent politicians, quelling domestic violence, preventing the spread of hostile ideologies, and reestablishing public order in a country undergoing modernization. Unlike the majority of NATO's member nations that had already attained modernity some time ago, Turkey had not yet reached that point. It was experiencing the social upheaval associated with modernization. In describing the relationship between modernization and violence, Huntington concludes: "In fact, modernity breeds stability, but modernization breeds instability."¹¹ With specific reference to the effect of modernization on politics, Huntington claims that the efforts to achieve modernity "produce political disorder."¹² The Turkish military was viewed as a modernizing force up until its first intervention in May 1960. From then on, although its role in modernizing the country could not be denied, it functioned more as a tool for maintaining internal order and stability when the threshold of instability associated with the modernization process had been exceeded.

Peter Feaver describes the dilemma that the state—which has a monopoly on the military profession—faces as the "civil-military problematique." In essence, it can be

¹⁰ NATO, *Financial and Economic Data Relating to NATO Defense*, 2 December 1999; Available [Online] <<http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/1999/table6.pdf>> [27 March 2000].

¹¹ Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press), 41.

¹² *Ibid.*

described as “the need to have protection *by* the military and the need to have protection *from* the military.”¹³ The military must be powerful enough to counter threats to national security, but not so powerful as to pose a threat to the state. A “watered-down” military, although perhaps easily brought under civilian control, serves no purpose whatsoever, because it cannot defend the country from external threat and can even invite aggression.¹⁴ An example of this pattern of civil-military relations was found in Tunisia during the long presidency of Habib Bourguiba, who “sought to keep his troops quiescent by limiting the size of the armed forces, the quality and quantity of their armaments, and their operational responsibilities.”¹⁵ In the Turkish case, the military elite believes that its role as guardian of the Republic is “outside of and above politics.”¹⁶ Rather than threaten society by intervening and imposing military rule with no intent of disengaging from politics, “it is willing to return to the barracks once disputes are settled” and “rational democracy” has been established.”¹⁷

B. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1. The Danger of Analyzing the Military as a Monolithic Organization

The military is not a monolith in which all members of the organization possess the same characteristics. There can be cleavages along class, ethnic, generational, or

¹³ Peter D. Feaver, “The Civil-Military Problematique: Huntington, Janowitz, and the Question of Civilian Control,” *Armed Forces and Society* 23 (1996): 154.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Harold D. Nelson, *Tunisia: A Country Study* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1988), 290.

¹⁶ Turkish General Staff, *Türk Silahlı Kuvvetleri'nin Toplum İçindeki Yeri (The Turkish Armed Forces' Place in Society)*; Available [Online]<<http://www.tsk.mil.tr/bbm/gnkur/g27.html>> [7 July 1999].

¹⁷ Kamrava, 73.

ideological lines. These cleavages are an impediment to professionalization because they divide the organization. At the time the Republic was established, officers were divided between traditionalists and modernists. Prior to the 1960 military coup the Turkish officer corps became divided along generational and socio-economic lines, largely as a result of Turkey's NATO membership. The junior officers were technologically oriented, whereas the senior officers wanted to maintain the status quo. As Feroz Ahmad points out: "NATO deepened the division between junior and senior officers along technological lines while Menderes' appeasement of the pashas divided them along lines of rank and socio-economic status."¹⁸ In this case, external factors such as the influence of international organizations caused a division within the Turkish officer corps. The junior officers were able to become more professional through the acquisition of technical skills.

Once the 1960 coup had been executed and the National Unity Committee (NUC) of thirty-eight officers was established, fourteen of the members were expelled due to their radical beliefs. These officers wanted to hold on to the reins of power until desperately needed reforms were enacted, rather than return rule to the civilian leadership as soon as possible, as was previously announced to the public. Also regarding generational differences, it is worth noting that the coup of 1960 was undertaken mostly by junior officers and later led to friction between the NUC and the senior leadership of the armed forces, who considered the coup-makers to be young upstarts. Prior to departing from the 1960 coup, it merits mention that two counter-coups were later

¹⁸ Feroz Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), 125.

attempted by military officers and cadets who believed that the NUC was wrong in reinstating civilian rule so soon.

This was later not the case in the 12 September 1980 "generals' coup" in which officers' support to the coup was much more broad-based. The reason for this change could be the fact that the military had incorporated Kemalism into its military educational system, the effect of which was to strengthen its corporate identity and form a more homogenous body of officers. Unlike the 1960 coup which was characterized as a junior officers' intervention, the 1980 coup was initiated by the senior leadership with broad support among the rank and file.

Religious and ethnic cleavages may also exist. Differences in the degree to which officers and their families practice religion has led to their expulsion of some officers from the military on the grounds that their behavior is reactionary and goes against the principles of Atatürk. With respect to ethnicity, because of the way "Turkishness" was emphasized as a way of rallying national feeling in the Republic's formative years, there is not much data available on ethnic cleavages among the officer corps, which would be a barrier to professionalism, such as preferential treatment of ethnic Turks over other groups like Kurds, Armenians or Jews within the military or, worst case, the inability of these ethnic minorities to become career officers at all.

Regarding class cleavages, the Turkish military is relatively homogenous. In fact, it has a reputation of being self-perpetuating. The majority of the officers are drawn from lower middle class backgrounds, generally as sons and daughters of military officers and

civil servants.¹⁹ The sustainment of Kemalism as an ideology, in addition to playing a key role in military socialization, may also be passed down through generations of military personnel.

When examining military professionalism and its relationship to civil-military relations, one is primarily concerned with the officer corps, because the “principal focus of civil-military relations is the relations of the officer corps to the state.”²⁰ It is necessary to point out that the Turkish military is a mixed (*karma*) system consisting of career, contract, and conscript personnel. The Turkish armed forces’ military manpower consists of active duty career officers (*subaylar*); civilian university-educated lieutenants fulfilling their military service requirement (*asteğmenler*); career non-commissioned officers (*astsubaylar*); contract specialists (*uzman erbaşlar/uzman jandarmalar*); and conscript sergeants/corporals/privates (*çavuşlar/onbaşılar*).²¹

Study of the civilian university-educated lieutenants that are only in the military long enough to fulfill their service obligation is enlightening. Due to their advanced education, rather than serve as conscripts, this group of personnel serves in the position of “third” lieutenants, which is one step below career officers. Their beliefs may be more liberal than those of career officers, because they have not received the Kemalist indoctrination to the degree that career officers have.

¹⁹ James Brown, “The Military and Society: The Turkish Case,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 25, no. 3 (1989): 398-399.

²⁰ Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, Belknap Press, 1985), 3.

²¹ Turkish General Staff, *Türk Silahlı Kuvvetlerinde Profesyonel Askerlik (The Professional Military in the Turkish Armed Forces)*; Available [Online] <<http://www.tsk.mil.tr/bbm/gnkur/g38.html>> [21 July 1999].

2. Huntington's Theory of Civil-Military Relations and His Critics

A great deal of academic work has been published on civil-military relations in Turkey, especially following the military interventions of 1960, 1971 and 1980. It should come as no surprise that the level of interest in the relationship between the military and the civilian political leadership rose significantly during these periods, given the fact that a military intervention is the most obvious sign that this relationship is not harmonious. True to the Turkish case, once the military restored civilian rule and returned to the barracks, scholars tended to focus on other aspects of state-society relations and civil-military relations assumed a less prominent role until the next crisis comes along.

It is interesting to note that the volume of literature dealing with civil-military relations in Turkey is once again on the rise, ostensibly sparked by the success of the Islamist Welfare Party (WP) in the early 1990s and the coming to power of WP leader Necmettin Erbakan as prime minister of a coalition government in June 1996. Erbakan was able to stay in power just shy of one year before resigning under great pressure from the military. Although this event was not a direct military intervention, the enormous influence of the military in political affairs was demonstrated once again and the military's role in society came under intense scrutiny. A rash of recent literature has attempted to explain the nature of contemporary Turkish civil-military relations using various models and highlighting the uniqueness of the Turkish case.

Samuel Huntington articulated his theory of civil-military relations at the height of the Cold War in 1957 with his seminal work *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations*. It is important to note the time in which

Huntington was writing. Although his work uses examples from France, Germany and England to illustrate how military professionalism developed in the last few centuries, Huntington was primarily concerned with correcting a flaw he perceived in the nature of civil-military relations in America. He does not claim to have created an all-encompassing model that can explain the dynamics of civil-military relations of any country in the world. In the American case he examines, he is particularly concerned that a "liberal society...will not produce sufficient military might to survive the Cold War."²² His policy recommendation was to introduce more conservatism into American society in order to recognize the need for a military of adequate size and capability to counter the Soviet threat .

Huntington considers civilian control of the military to be essential to state affairs and a must for established democracies. He describes two types of control: subjective and objective. Subjective control, which minimizes military power, is achieved when the military becomes politicized and is used by political groups to serve their own ends. Objective control, which maximizes military professionalism, is achieved when a professional military is autonomous and apolitical. He maintains that objective civilian control is the best form of control.

If military professionalism is essential to achieving civilian control, we must first understand what professionalism is. A number of striking features emerge when one analyzes the military. First, the military possesses the means of coercion and the state is the only institution that monopolizes the means of coercion in order to protect the country from threats to national security. Whereas formerly this responsibility could be assumed

²² Feaver, "The Civil-Military Problematique," 161.

by a politician and military leader in one and the same person, the nature of military operations has become so complex that the military profession has become a full time job for the individual. In order to hone his skills as a professional, the military officer must concentrate all of his efforts on his profession. State intervention in his affairs is equally as bad as the military officer becoming entangled in politics. The officer must be given the latitude and the resources with which to accomplish his mission. The military requires autonomy from political affairs in order to preserve its core professional values.

Huntington characterized military professionalism as encompassing expertise, responsibility and corporateness. The fact that an officer spends approximately one third of his military career undergoing military education is an indicator of the complexity of his profession. Given the daunting task of managing violence, which falls upon the shoulders of the military officer in a society, Huntington emphasizes that the “direction, operation, and control of a human organization whose primary function is the application of violence”²³ is the one defining feature of a military officer that no other profession possesses. Huntington reasons that the extent of an officer’s professional competence is greater based upon the size and composition of the formations he is able to direct. That is to say that a commander capable of synchronizing air, land and naval forces in large-scale operations has reached the apex of his profession. In present day terms that individual would be a four-star commander of a regional command, whose command consists of subordinate land, air and maritime components.

As previously mentioned, education plays an important role in the professional development of an officer. Huntington contends that an officer must not only possess the

technical skills required of the profession, but should also have the benefit of a liberal education in order to master his vocation. The study of history becomes an important component of an officer's education because it allows him to familiarize himself with the military tradition. Although Huntington is an advocate of a liberal education as a basis for an officer's professional development, he cautions against the adoption of any ideology as the motivating factor for an officer's military actions.²⁴ An officer should be able to carry out his military function regardless of the ideological orientation of the state he supports.

With regard to responsibility, an officer is responsible to the state. He may give advice regarding military affairs, but must accept the course of action chosen by civilian political leaders and carry out their orders. When a corps of officers has reached a high degree of professionalism "it stands ready to carry out the wishes of any civilian group which secures legitimate authority within the state."²⁵ It is beyond the professional competence of the officer to determine whether or not the state's policy is just. His duty is to follow orders. In Feaver's words, "civilians have a right to be wrong."²⁶

Corporateness is essential to the military profession in that it maintains cohesion within the organization and allows for a degree of autonomy of the officer corps from state affairs. The hierarchy of rank and the hierarchy of office are also critical to understanding the corporate nature of the officer corps. Promotions in rank are normally

²³ Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, 11.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 74.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 84.

²⁶ Feaver, "The Civil-Military Problematique," 154.

determined within the officer corps itself. Assignments to particular positions, especially at higher levels, involve external influence.²⁷

Another important aspect of the military professional is the military ethic that guides him. This ethic is the result of the enormous responsibility given to the officer by the state to defend the nation. Huntington warns that the military ethic is exclusive of an officer's involvement in politics. He asserts: "Politics is beyond the scope of military competence, dividing the profession against itself, and substituting extraneous values for professional values."²⁸ In short, "the military officer must remain neutral politically."²⁹ Political neutrality within the officer corps and the state's ability to grant a sufficient amount of autonomy, which allows it to maintain a high degree of professionalism, leads to effective objective civilian control. In assessing civil-military relations in the countries participating in the third wave of democratization almost 40 years after his theory was formulated, Huntington describes objective civilian control in "industrial democracies" as having "1) a high level of military professionalism and recognition by military officers of the limits of their professional competence; 2) the effective subordination of the military to the civilian political leaders who make the basic decisions on foreign and military policy; 3) the recognition and acceptance by that leadership of an area of professional competence and autonomy for the military; and 4) as a result, the minimization of military intervention in politics and of political intervention in the military."³⁰

²⁷ Huntington, *Soldier and the State*, 16-17.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 71.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Samuel P. Huntington, "Reforming Civil-Military Relations," in *Civil-Military Relations and Democracy*, ed. Larry Diamond and Marc Plattner (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 3-4.

Virtually every document written on civil-military relations since his book was published contains a reference to Huntington's theory. What particularly preoccupies scholars is the notion that maximizing military professionalism as an independent variable causes objective civilian control. This is probably the single-most tested proposition for case studies of civil-military relations the world over. Scholars are divided over the validity of Huntington's proposition when testing it in actual cases. Some would agree that maximizing military professionalism and granting it the degree of autonomy necessary to "police its ranks" does in fact bring the military under objective civilian control. However, others would argue that maximizing military professionalism actually leads to more involvement of the military in politics and less civilian control. This is especially the case when the military is focused on internal security and national development, which is commonly the case in modernizing countries.

Much discussion also concerns whether the "apolitical" character of the military as forwarded by Huntington is more ideal than reality. Most would agree that the officer corps in any country exerts a certain degree of informal influence—some to a greater degree than others—in civilian affairs that could not be characterized as apolitical. It would do this for no other reason than to maintain its institutional autonomy and preclude civilian interference in its affairs. Thus, the idea of an apolitical military has not been confirmed by empirical analysis. Assuming that the military is a political actor to a certain degree, the question then becomes: to what degree is military influence acceptable while still maintaining objective civilian control?

Another area of contention is the claim that a dichotomy of civilian and military spheres actually exists and "never the twain shall meet." Some scholars would contend

that the line between the civilian realm and that of the military as drawn by Huntington is not that concrete and would submit that there is much overlap between the two. In her theory of concordance, Rebecca Schiff contends that “civil-military separation is not the only possible form of civil-military relationship” and that “civil-military relations may involve separation, integration or a variety of other forms.”³¹ She criticizes the American model of military professionalism as introduced by Huntington as inapplicable to nations with “standards, histories, and cultures quite different from the western norm.”³² Schiff’s solution is a model that stresses cooperation between “the military, the political elites, and the citizenry...that may or may not involve separation but does not require it.”³³ In an enlightening application of Schiff’s theory to the Turkish case, Nilüfer Narlı maintains that the concordance model “explains the correlation between the army’s increased professionalism and its enhanced political influence,”³⁴ which is in direct opposition to Huntington’s notion of maximizing military professionalism to minimize political influence. She feels that this is made possible because increased professionalism has allowed the military “to meet shared objectives” among the military, political elites and the citizenry.³⁵ In this case the accepted degree of military involvement in politics would be a matter of concordance among these three entities.

³¹ Rebecca Schiff, “Civil-Military Relations Reconsidered: A Theory of Concordance,” *Armed Forces and Society* 22 (1995): 11.

³² *Ibid.*, 10.

³³ *Ibid.*, 7.

³⁴ Nilüfer Narlı, “Civil-Military Relations in Turkey,” *Turkish Studies* 1 (2000): 120.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

Still others, Schiff among them, would contend that cultural factors are absent from Huntington's proposition. When considering the case of Turkey, scholars are quick to point out that Turkey was formed from a *ghazi* or warrior state in which the military ruled for centuries. Military and political power was one and the same. Also critical to understanding the Turkish case is the claim that Atatürk implicitly entrusted the military with the duty of preserving the Western orientation of the country, a task not normally ascribed to the armed forces of other countries. In his famous speech in the central Anatolian city of Konya in 1931 Atatürk said:

Whenever the Turkish nation has wanted to take a step up, it has always looked to the army...as the leader of movements to achieve its lofty ideals....When speaking of the army I am speaking of the intelligentsia of the Turkish nation who are the true owners of this country....The Turkish nation...considers its army the guardian of its ideals.³⁶

Proponents of "new" military professionalism, a term coined by Alfred Stepan based upon his observations of military professionalism in Latin America, maintain that the demands of internal security and national development on the military vice defense of the nation from external threat, cause the military to become politicized.³⁷ In these cases the military is seen as a modernizer and a force capable of maintaining order during times of turmoil. Although Stepan believes that the "old" professionalism described by Huntington leads to civilian control when the military is oriented against external threats, this characterization of the officer corps in Latin America does not apply. There, in the absence of, or with minimal risk from, external threats, military professionalism focused

³⁶ Quoted in George Harris, "The Role of the Military in Turkish Politics," *The Middle East Journal* 19, no. 2 (1965): 56, f4.

³⁷ Alfred Stepan, "The New Professionalism of Internal Warfare and Military Role Expansion," in *Authoritarian Brazil: Origins, Policies and Future*, ed. Alfred Stepan (New Haven and London: Yale

on internal security and national development has led to more involvement in politics. Just as Atatürk ascribed to the Turkish military the role of modernizer and guardian, so to the Latin American militaries assumed this same role. This is often the case because the military is the most advanced and best-organized institution capable of undertaking such a task.

With regard to military professionalization and civil-military relations in the Middle East, Kamrava argues that professionalization, which is defined as “modern military equipment, established procedures for recruitment and promotions, and advanced training,” has not led to objective civilian control, but rather has “increased the potential for the military’s continued intervention in the political process.”³⁸ Kamrava contends, however, that because Turkey and Israel fall into the category of “military democracies,” the impact of military professionalism on politics is not perhaps as severe as in one of the other three categories he groups Middle Eastern countries: tribally dependent monarchies; *mukhabarat* (intelligence) and military states under autocratic politicians; and nations possessing dual militaries.³⁹ Kamrava sees military professionalism as increasing both military and political power by increasing the “military’s corporate identity.”⁴⁰ Jeremy Salt, a former associate professor of political science at Bilkent University, a private institution in Turkey’s capital, Ankara, regards “military

University Press, 1973): 47-65.

³⁸ Kamrava, 67-68.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 70.

democracy” as a contradiction in terms and accuses the military of undermining “Turkey’s fragile democratic evolution.”⁴¹

Pertinent to the discussion of military professionalism is that of autonomy, what forms it takes and how it relates to civilian control. The terms “corporate identity” and “autonomy” are often used interchangeably. In his analysis of military autonomy and emerging democracies in South America, David Pion-Berlin distinguishes between the military’s institutional and its political autonomy.⁴² Institutional autonomy is the logical progression of any organization, is defensive in nature and protects the organization’s professional core. Political autonomy, however, is offensive in nature and seeks to involve the military in the political decision-making process. In order to determine the overall level of political autonomy that exists within the military, Pion-Berlin measured the level of the military’s political autonomy in five South American countries as it related to twelve defense issues. The issues were categorized as belonging entirely to 1) the military professional realm (junior level personnel decisions, military doctrine, military education, military reform, and force levels); 2) the gray area that exists between the military professional and the political realm (arms production/procurement, military budget, defense organization, and senior level personnel decisions); and 3) the political realm (human rights, internal security and intelligence gathering).

⁴¹ Jeremy Salt, “Turkey’s Military “Democracy,”” *Current History* 98, no. 625 (1999): 78.

⁴² David Pion Berlin, “Military Autonomy and Emerging Democracies in South America,” *Comparative Politics* 25, no. 1 (1992): 83-102.

Ümit Cizre Sakallıoğlu applied Pion-Berlin's model to the Turkish case in order to describe the "anatomy of the Turkish military political autonomy."⁴³ As would be expected, the Turkish military possessed an overall high level of political autonomy in all of the defense issues. Although Sakallıoğlu did not mention the issue of human rights in his study, I would conclude that this area is also one in which the military has a high degree of autonomy. The justification for this is that I am aware of no cases in which Turkish officers have been tried and convicted of human rights violations during the conduct of their struggle against the PKK. Conscious of the fact that it has come under fire from the international community for human rights violations, however, the military leadership has instituted a program of training military personnel to respect human rights toward the civilian population in Turkey's southeast where the PKK is operating, prior to their employment there.⁴⁴

Sakallıoğlu's study shows that there is a high degree of professionalism in the Turkish military as measured by the high level of autonomy it exercises regarding the defense issues in the professional realm. This is to be expected due to the advanced development of military professionalism in Turkey and the need for the military to have a sufficient degree of institutional autonomy to concentrate on the task of defending the nation. It exercises great freedom in making junior level personnel decisions, formulating military doctrine, developing and overseeing military education, undertaking

⁴³ Ümit Cizre Sakallıoğlu, "The Anatomy of the Turkish Military's Political Autonomy," *Comparative Politics* 29, no. 2: 151-166.

⁴⁴ Turkish General Staff, *TSK'nde İnsan Hakları Eğitimleri (Human Rights Training in the Turkish Armed Forces)*; Available [Online] <<http://www.tsk.mil.tr/bbm/merkez1999/gnkur/g33.html>> [9 April 2000].

military reform and setting force levels. All of these defense issues are handled by the military with minimal civilian interference.

The gray area is that area in which the military may exercise its influence in political matters as a natural function of its relationship with the state. This is where the military voices its concerns. This level of autonomy is not seen as destructive if its level is low or medium. High levels of autonomy in this area would indicate a cause for concern that the military is interfering excessively in political affairs. As will be later demonstrated, there is evidence in the Turkish case to assess the military's level of autonomy to be high in the areas of arms production/procurement, military budget, defense organization, and senior level personnel decisions.

The political realm is the area in which the military should exert a low level of autonomy since this realm belongs to the politicians. High levels of military autonomy here indicate the offensive nature of the military's autonomy, which is the case with Turkey. The Turkish military's autonomy is considerable with respect to the defense issues of human rights, internal security and intelligence gathering.

What appears to be lacking in Pion-Berlin's model is how to account for the influence of Kemalism as a component of the Turkish military's autonomy. Perhaps another defense issue labeled "national strategy" under the political realm would be applicable to the Turkish case. Concerning this defense issue the Turkish military exercises a great deal of influence in determining what the national strategy is by insisting that the state adhere to the Kemalist ideology.

The military's adherence to Kemalism also affects other defense issues such as defense organization, internal security, military education, military doctrine and junior

level personnel decisions. Military interventions have led to changes in the governmental structure such as the subordination of the Chief of the General Staff to the Prime Minister vice the Minister of Defense, and the establishment of the influential National Security Council (NSC) in which the military can influence decisions in the political realm. The military's expulsion of personnel believed to have radical Islamist tendencies is one example of the influence of Kemalism on junior level personnel decisions. The military's preoccupation with combating political Islam highlights its role of guardian of the nation's Kemalist ideals. Military education involves the indoctrination of military personnel in Atatürk's principles and reforms. Military doctrine is affected by the additional burden of the military's monitoring political affairs in its guardian role to the exclusion of focusing on national defense.

3. Is the Case of Turkey All that Extraordinary?

Turkey's case is extraordinary for a number of reasons. First, the Republic was formed by a charismatic modernizer who enacted radical reforms from above in a very short period of time. Atatürk was able to succeed in this endeavor by cleverly planning out how he would introduce each reform without creating excessive social disorder. An example of this strategy would be his elimination of the temporal sultanate, while still retaining the spiritual caliphate until the time was right to abolish it. He knew that the abolition of both monarchical titles at the same time would cause great opposition within the Ottoman Empire, especially because the peasant masses of Anatolia were overwhelmingly Muslim and respected the title of Caliph, so he sequenced the

elimination of each of them quite ingeniously.⁴⁵ Additionally, his cry for Turkish nationalism is still present in the motto which is inscribed on building facades and banners in public places: "How happy I am to say: "I am a Turk!"'"

When Atatürk donned civilian clothes and became president he enjoyed the respect of the military because of his past performance as a great military leader. One of Atatürk's most famous speeches was to the youth of Turkey in 1927, in which he entrusted the preservation of his Western vision to them. He stated that their first duty was to defend and protect Turkish independence and the Turkish Republic forever.⁴⁶ Young military officers at the time understood this duty to apply especially to them and considered the defense and protection of the Republic's ideals their charter. This responsibility was legalized in the 1935 Army Internal Service Law, under which the army's mission was "to protect and defend the Turkish Republic."⁴⁷ This responsibility entailed not only external defense, but also defense against internal threats like separatist or radical Islamic movements. Shortly before Atatürk passed away in November 1938, he again implored the military to protect Turkey against internal and external threats.⁴⁸

An appreciation of how this duty was internalized by the military and still is perpetuated today can be gained by examining the eulogy which the comrades of a Turkish officer, who fell in 1994 while on his first mission in the southeast against the

⁴⁵ Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1961), 404.

⁴⁶ Atatürk's Address to the Turkish Youth; available from <http://www.ataturk.com/genc.htm>; Internet; accessed on 6 September 2000.

⁴⁷ Mehmet Ali Birand, *Shirts of Steel: An Anatomy of the Turkish Armed Forces* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 1991), 83.

⁴⁸ Lytle Preston Hughes, "Atatürk, Atatürkçülük and Political Development in Turkey" (Ph.D. diss., University of Mississippi, 1992), 120.

PKK, had printed in a Turkish newspaper. After quoting an excerpt from Atatürk's speech to the Turkish youth it reads:

Infantry First Lieutenant Erdal Kurtoğlu fell on June 16th while on his first mission. He [like Atatürk] also believed that the preservation of the Republic was not only his duty, but that of all Turkish youth. Our condolences.⁴⁹

The military also views protection against political or radical Islam as a constitutional responsibility. As former Deputy Chief of the General Staff Çevik Bir points out

We are acting strictly in accordance with the Turkish Constitution. Article 2 of the Constitution declares we are a secular country, and Article 4 says that this provision can never be changed. Parliament has given us the responsibility to protect the Turkish mainland and also the Turkish Republic.⁵⁰

Along with this perceived responsibility of protecting the Republic comes the associated preservation by the military of the ideology of Kemalism, which the military had internalized. Kemalism has a curious origin. Although it has been asserted that Atatürk deliberately left behind an ideology to guide the progress of Turkey, Preston Hughes could find no empirical evidence to "support the view that Atatürk led or even supported development of an explicit Kemalist ideology."⁵¹ Following Atatürk's death politicians debated regularly over who was more in line with the Kemalist principles. In an effort to maintain the momentum of Atatürk's reforms a set of six principles was developed. They were: nationalism, republicanism, statism, reformism, secularism, and

⁴⁹ Hakan Evrensel, *Güneydoğudan Öyküler (Tales from the Southeast)* (Ankara: Dağpaş Mabaatcılık, 1997), 26.

⁵⁰ Daniel Pipes, "A New Axis: The Emerging Turkish-Israeli Entente," *The National Interest* 50 (Winter 1997/1998), 33.

populism. These principles became the six arrows represented on the Republican Peoples Party logo. The most significant principle was that of secularism. Despite the intellectual discourse over the matter, the military "continued to inculcate young cadets with an Atatürkist perspective focused heavily on the personage of Atatürk and on his military genius, thereby concurrently emphasizing the special relationship between Atatürk's spirit and the officer corps."⁵²

One interesting ritual, which military cadets at the army officer academy undergo, occurs every year on 13 March, the day Atatürk entered the officer academy in 1899. When Atatürk's number is called out as part of the roll call, the cadets all respond: "He is within us."⁵³ This signifies the personal commitment each officer has to Atatürk and his ideals. Given the spirit of Atatürk that pervades in the officer academies, which is carried over from the military high schools most cadets attend prior to coming to the academies, it is safe to assume that this ritual is one of actual reverence and not just obedience to tradition.

As a result of the political polarization that characterized the 1970s the General Staff and Land Forces Command published documents about Atatürk and Kemalism which were distributed throughout the military. The intent was to remind military personnel of the history of Atatürk's reforms and his principles as a counter to the ideologies of fascism and communism that were gaining more popularity in Turkey. A

⁵¹ Hughes, 91.

⁵² Ibid., 156.

⁵³ Ibid., 156-157.

heavy dose of Kemalism continued to be taught in the military high schools and officer academies. Leaders were given the duty of disseminating this information in their units.

Emphasis on Kemalism in the form of an Atatürkist system of thought and a “dynamic ideal” is still inculcated on today’s military personnel. The intent here is that Kemalism is a way of thinking that can be applied to modern times as a guidepost for progress in Turkey. It involves a critical, scientific approach to solving contemporary problems.

The military is involved in politics to protect Atatürk’s principles. However, the execution of this Western-oriented goal can lead to political outcomes that go against these principles, such as the rise to power of the Islamists. If the military does not become involved politically, then the outcome could be equally as disastrous. William Hale observed that although one may argue, “if the army had not intervened, then the civilian political system would have been forced to solve its problems by itself, and would thereby have acquired greater strength and maturity,”⁵⁴ military non-intervention could also have led to civil war. When assessing the military’s unique role in Turkish politics, Hale concludes, “[I]t appears even though the army’s twin commitment to guardianship of the state and social and economic modernization may have left it with an ambiguous attitude towards political democracy, the fact that it ensured the survival of the basic state structures was of crucial importance.”⁵⁵

In short, Turkey’s case is extraordinary. It entails an ideologically motivated military acting as the guardian of Kemalism. Its conviction in modernization as equated

⁵⁴ Hale, 330.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

with Westernization, although praised by Western powers, can lead to undesired outcomes, such as the rise of political Islam. An observation made by Huntington regarding political openings in the Arab world, namely, that "western democracy strengthens anti-Western political forces,"⁵⁶ can well apply to the Turkish case. Reflecting on a conference he attended in the 1960s, Ernest Gellner also describes the predicament that adherence to the Kemalist ideology puts the military in, especially in a society in which Islam plays a vital role.

The basic dilemma was, so far as I could see, that the Kemalist heritage was committed to the Western socio-political system, but if that system was implemented, then sooner or later people who flirted with religion and betrayed the Kemalist tradition, would win the elections. Either you give up democracy and in so doing, contradict the principles you are supposed to be applying, or else you implement it, in which case you allow people to win who will, in turn betray it...First, the army, the guardian of this new democratic tradition, allows free elections to take place. A party wins that would betray the Kemalist tradition, so the army steps in and hangs its leader. Then after a time it hands the government back again and so on.⁵⁷

Contemporary symbols of this guardian role are the ritual of visiting the mausoleum of Atatürk prior to convening the National Security Council or the Supreme Military Council, wearing lapel pins featuring a bust of Atatürk and bumper sticks reading "*Ata'nın izindeyiz*" ("We are on the path of Atatürk"). Day planners and calendars distributed annually by the military to its personnel contain a picture of Atatürk in military uniform, excerpts from his unchanging message to the military (*Ata'nın değişmeyen mesajı*) and to the Turkish youth, as well as his inspirational sayings. The

⁵⁶ Samuel P Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations," *Foreign Affairs* 72, no. 3 (1993): 32.

⁵⁷ Ernest Gellner, "The Turkish Option in Comparative Perspective," in *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey* [book on-line], ed. Sibel Bozdoğan and Resat Kasaba (Washington, DC: University of Washington Press, 1997); Available [Online] <<https://www.cc.columbia.edu/sec/dlc/ciao/book/bozdogan/bozdogan13.html>> [4 September 2000].

1999 version also lists Atatürk's six principles with an explanation for each one. The presence of Ataturk and his legacy are unifying symbols within the military.

II. A BRIEF SURVEY OF CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS IN TURKEY AND FACTORS AFFECTING THIS RELATIONSHIP

Prior to embarking on a discussion of professionalism in the Turkish officer corps, and its relationship to civilian control, it is appropriate to review the pattern of civil-military relations that has existed in Turkey over the last seventy-seven years. It is worth reemphasizing that Turkey as a nation has been undergoing modernization during this period. In its Ottoman past, the military was seen as both the subject and object of modernization.⁵⁸ This view persists today. Although democratic consolidation may be within reach, it has not yet been achieved. Objective civilian control of the military is a condition of democracy. It follows that Turkey cannot be labeled democratic until civilian control is assured.

The most significant threat to Turkey's sovereignty during this period was that of the Soviet Union. Military aid was initially provided to Turkey in an attempt to modernize its forces to deter Soviet aggression. Other key events that occurred during this period were Turkey's entry into the Korean War in 1950 on the side of the United Nations forces, its deployment of troops to Cyprus in 1974 to protect the rights of the Turkish Cypriot minority, the supporting role it played on the side of the Western coalition during the Gulf War, and its recent involvement in a number of peacekeeping operations, either in support of the UN or in fulfillment of its NATO commitments. The most recent example is its participation in the NATO air campaign over Serbia and the

⁵⁸ Heper and Güney, 636.

deployment of forces to assist in peacekeeping efforts in Kosovo. Also, the military has been involved in facilitating military cooperation agreements, is participating in regional security organizations, and is redefining its role in the post-Cold War security environment.

Internally, Turkey has intervened in civilian affairs three times since 1960. In all cases it aimed to restore order after political stalemate and protracted periods of domestic violence occurred. On all occasions it met with the approval of the public and chose to return to the barracks once it had completed its task and turned the government back over to the civilian leadership. Most recently the military has been preoccupied with combating separatist PKK terrorism that began in 1984 and exposing the potential negative effects of political Islam and reactionary activities on the country's future.

A. FROM THE FOUNDING OF THE TURKISH REPUBLIC TO THE INTERVENTION OF 1960

1. Kemal Atatürk's Legacy

Mustafa Kemal was the founder of modern Turkey. Later he was honored with the title of "Atatürk," meaning "Father of the Turks," for his remarkable accomplishments in forming the Turkish nation. Kemal started out as an army officer in the multiethnic Ottoman Empire, which was dissolved shortly after the First World War. Kemal's officer training began in 1895 in Salonika where he received preparatory military education before he moved on to more of the same schooling in Manastir. From there Kemal entered the officer academy in Istanbul as an infantry cadet in 1899. After attending the staff officer course, Kemal graduated as a staff captain in 1905. It is

obvious that Kemal began his military education at a young age and spent a good deal of time in military schools. While at the staff officer course Kemal took a particular interest in politics and associated with officers who considered the Ottoman regime to be corrupt and backward. When his involvement with this group was discovered, Kemal received an initial assignment that was less than desirable for an aspiring young officer.⁵⁹

Although it is not within the scope of this thesis to recount all of Kemal's achievements, suffice it to say that he had an illustrious military career and was the only Ottoman officer to emerge from World War I with an outstanding reputation. Kemal distinguished himself in the Italian and Balkan Wars and, after serving for a time as military attaché in Sofia, assumed command of the 19th Division during World War I. It was here that Kemal gained recognition as a great leader in his division's defense of the Dardanelles Straits against a British attack in 1915. This victory, which prevented an assault on the Ottoman capital of Istanbul, "was one of the few successes won by Ottoman arms during the war."⁶⁰

Kemal went on to assume command of larger formations during the war and, when he was assigned to the position of Inspector General of the 9th Army in eastern Turkey, he decided to organize a resistance movement in Anatolia against what he had felt for some time was a corrupt and inefficient Ottoman state. Kemal was successful in achieving the sovereignty of the Turkish nation by driving foreign powers such as England, Greece, France and Italy out of Turkey and reversing the unfavorable terms of the Treaty of Sevres with the Lausanne Treaty of 1923. Turkey was declared a Republic

⁵⁹ Lewis, 243-244.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 244.

on 29 October 1923 with Kemal as president. The Ottoman sultanate had been abolished a few months prior to the declaration of the Republic and, shortly thereafter, the Caliph, an Islamic title from which the Ottoman sultans had also derived their legitimacy, was eliminated in 1924. Kemal's rationale for these and subsequent radical reforms was to systemically rid the country of all vestiges of the Ottoman past.

Bernard Lewis perhaps sums up Kemal's political philosophy best by stating:

In his political ideas Kemal Atatürk was an heir to the Young Turks—more especially of the nationalist, positivist, and Westernizing wing among them. The two dominant beliefs in his life were in the Turkish nation and in progress; the future of both lay in civilization, which for him meant the modern civilization of the West, and no other.⁶¹

Kemal wanted to establish a modern Turkish state in a revolutionary manner that was more radical than that of the Young Turk revolution of 1908, which forced the Sultan to adopt a constitution that had been shelved for thirty years. Kemal believed in the Turkish identity of the new nation over the Ottoman and Islamic identity of the past. He intended to make up for lost time in enacting his radical reforms so that Turkey could catch up with the West.

A few years following the revolution, in his famous six-day speech or *nutuk*, Kemal explained to the Turkish public his rationale for the revolutionary actions that surrounded the establishment of the Republic. In a subsequent speech, Kemal described the role he envisioned for the military as encompassing more than just defending Turkey's borders from external threats; he also wanted it to be a "fountainhead of

⁶¹ Ibid., 292.

progressive practices” and “an organ for the spread of the reforms he considered vital.”⁶² Kemal envisioned in it a role as modernizer.

The form of control that the civilian leadership held over the military in the early years of the Republic was more subjective than objective. Civilian power was maximized. Kemal donned civilian clothes and demanded that military officers serving in government positions make a choice between one of the two vocations. Kemal and his successor Ismet İnönü were able to bring the military under civilian control because of the high esteem in which they were held due to their military past and the fact that the military was close to the civilian leadership. If we use the size of the defense budget as an indicator of civilian power over the military, the budget fell from 40% in 1926 to about 28% in the 1930's.⁶³ During the first years of the Republic the military was politicized to the extent that, with the exception of some officers that did not agree with Kemal's autocratic nature, it was committed to the support of the Kemalist regime.

The legacy that Kemal left the military was an ambiguous one. On the one hand he wanted a politically neutral military, because he felt that officers in politics were not able to focus on their profession; on the other hand, Kemal saw the military as guardians of the ideals of the Republic. The latter responsibility almost necessitated the military's involvement in politics if the secular regime were in danger.

Kemal founded the Republican Peoples Party (RPP) in 1923. The military was identified with the RPP, which remained in power until 1950 when it was defeated in elections by the Democrat Party (DP) of Adnan Menderes. The RPP leadership

⁶² Harris, “The Role of the Turkish Military,” 55.

⁶³ Daniel Lerner and Richard Robinson, “Swords and Plowshares: The Turkish Army as a

developed an ideology known as Kemalism or Atatürkism named after its founder. In simple terms, Kemalism “rests on the ideal that Turkey is a nation-state and that its form of government is republican.”⁶⁴ Key to this description is the secular nature of the republic. Kemal passed away in 1938 and was succeeded as president by his military comrade and loyal friend, İsmet İnönü. İnönü was the logical choice to oversee the project that Kemal had begun.

2. The Truman Doctrine

Due to a decrease in defense spending prior to the Second World War, Turkish military equipment had become antiquated. Turkey remained neutral throughout most of the war. After the war, the Soviet Union was making demands on both Greece and Turkey. England could no longer serve as the major foreign backer of these countries, so the United States was obliged to step in. Convinced that the possibility of a communist takeover in Greece was a reality, the United States administration acted quickly. After assessing the situation in Turkey, in which the Soviets demanded the return of the eastern Turkish provinces of Kars and Ardahan, as well as joint control of the strategic Turkish Straits, aid to Turkey was also included in the plan. The Turks were surprised but grateful for the assistance offered by the United States under the Truman Doctrine. In

Modernizing Force,” *World Politics* 13, no. 1 (1960): 27.

⁶⁴ Kemal Karpaz, “Military Interventions: Army-Civilian Relations in Turkey Before and After 1980,” in *State, Democracy and the Military: Turkey in the 1980s*, ed. Metin Heper and Ahmet Evin (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1988): 153.

accordance with the Truman Doctrine, "Turkey was to receive aid primarily to strengthen its military establishment" in the form of a grant.⁶⁵

This decision increased the morale of the Turkish military appreciably and U.S. military advisers were sent to work with the Turkish armed forces. In addition to receiving in-country training, select Turkish officers were sent to the United States and Europe for military education. Lerner and Robinson emphasize that the aid and military advisers provided under the auspices of the Truman doctrine were instrumental not only in modernizing the force to meet its security obligations, but they also provided the civilian work force with trained specialists, who could utilize the skills learned during their military service in civilian occupations.⁶⁶

U.S. missions such as the United States Air Force Group (TUSAFG), which was activated to modernize the Turkish air force, contributed immeasurably to increasing the combat capability and professionalism of the Turkish air force. In fact, the Turkish government was so impressed by the assistance rendered by TUSAFG, that its assistance was requested in the reorganization of the General Staff. The United States accepted this request and, as a result of its work, Turkey established the Ministry of Defense on 1 July 1949 based on the American recommendation. As part of the reorganization the Chief of the General Staff was subordinate to the Minister of Defense; "the supreme commanders of the army, navy, and air force held equal rank; [and] their representatives on the General Staff were to be equals also."⁶⁷ This arrangement increased the degree of

⁶⁵ George Harris, *Troubled Alliance: Turkish-American Problems in Historical Perspective, 1945-1971* (Washington, D.C. and Stanford: American Enterprise Institute and Hoover Institution, 1972), 28.

⁶⁶ Robinson and Lerner, 30-32.

⁶⁷ Craig Livingston, "One Thousand Wings: The United States Air Force Group and the American

civilian control over the military by placing a civilian minister over the Chief of the General Staff. The effectiveness of the armed forces was also improved in that the Chief of the General Staff, as commander of the armed forces, was better able to direct joint operations.

American instructors were also employed in the military education of Turkish officers at the Staff College. Attendance at this level of military education is what distinguishes the staff officer of superior ability from the average officer. A detachment of American officers was assigned to the school and they "used the United States Army Command and General Staff School course at Fort Leavenworth as the basis of their own instruction" at the college and taught "American command and staff procedures, logistics, ADA [air defense artillery], engineering and national defense strategy."⁶⁸ This example illustrates that the Turkish staff officer received the same quality instruction as his American counterpart.

3. Turkey's Contribution to the Korean War

The civilian leadership of Turkey sought security from either a big power or from the collective defense offered by the newly formed NATO in 1949. With the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950, newly elected Prime Minister Adnan Menderes took advantage of this opportunity to improve Turkey's chances for inclusion into NATO. The Turks sent a brigade-sized force of about 4,500 personnel to fight alongside the United States as part of the United Nations forces. Despite the fact that the Turkish soldiers were ill-

Mission for Aid to Turkey, 1947-1950," *Middle Eastern Studies* 30, no. 4 (1994): 810-811.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 813.

equipped and had trouble communicating with their UN partners, the valor they displayed in combat earned them great renown. Participation in the Korean War enabled these soldiers to compare their situation with that of Western countries and form lasting impressions. In fact, one participant later achieved the rank of general and was a member of the National Unity Committee during the first military coup in Turkey in 1960. The officer was astonished by the decentralized authority of American officers, whereby a major on shift duty in the American forces headquarters was able to approve the repositioning of Turkish forces, a decision which in Turkey would have been made at the highest level.⁶⁹

4. Turkey's NATO Membership

The ploy to gain political capital from Turkey's participation in the Korean War was a success as Turkey became a member of NATO in February 1952. The road that led to Turkey's NATO membership was rocky and required substantial U.S. support. Many European member countries, particularly those in northern Europe, considered the territory occupied by Turkey well beyond the bounds of an alliance focused on the collective defense of Central Europe. They also saw NATO funds being channeled to Turkey in order to modernize its armed forces and improve its infrastructure. Lastly, although not publicly articulated, there was bound to be some apprehension with a predominately Muslim country becoming a member of the alliance.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Walter F. Weiker, *The Turkish Revolution, 1960-1961* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1963), 124.

⁷⁰ Harris, *Troubled Alliance*, 37-38.

NATO membership was the first step in what the civilian leadership considered to be Turkey's eventual integration with the West. Turkish personnel were assigned to NATO commands located in other member countries. Shortly after Turkish accession to NATO, the headquarters of the Allied Land Forces Southeastern Europe (LANDSOUTHEAST) and the headquarters of the Sixth Allied Tactical Air Force (SIXATAF) were established in the city of Izmir in western Turkey as subordinate headquarters to NATO's southern region command in Naples, Italy. NATO assignments became prestigious postings for Turkish officers because they could experience life outside of Turkey, increase their proficiency of English and work on multinational staffs. Turkish generals were also represented throughout the NATO command structure in key command and staff positions. Turkish officers were able to take advantage of the various educational opportunities provided by NATO from staff officer courses to attendance at the prestigious NATO Defense College.

Also of major significance to the professionalization of Turkey's military was Turkey's participation in the Baghdad Pact. Turkey signed a security pact with Iraq in 1955. Later, Iran, Pakistan and England joined the alliance, with the United States as an associate member. The objective of this security alliance was to serve as a bridge between NATO and the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) in containing the Soviet Union.⁷¹ Turkey had the distinction of being the only Middle Eastern country in both the Baghdad Pact and NATO. The alliance was renamed the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) and relocated its headquarters from Baghdad after Iraq withdraw

⁷¹ George Lenczowski, *American Presidents and the Middle East* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1990), 64.

its membership. CENTO membership served as yet another vehicle for the military to modernize and measure its progress as compared to neighboring militaries.

5. Point of No Return: The Intervention of 27 May 1960

On 27 May 1960, members of the Turkish military did something that they had not done since the Republic was founded. They displaced the civilian government of Prime Minister Adnan Menderes with the National Unity Committee (NUC). Prior to the intervention Turkey had been the model of the Middle East. In the 1950s military coups were common occurrences throughout the region. The Turkish military had had the distinction of accepting civilian control. That was until a group of thirty-eight officers led by General Cemal Gürsel determined that the leadership of the Democrat Party (DP) was straying from the path Atatürk had blazed. The economy was in a shambles, the military was top-heavy and the DP was curbing individual rights and civil liberties. In assessing the causes of the coup, George Harris maintains: "In the final analysis, it was these efforts to manipulate the armed forces [by the ruling and opposition parties] as a potential tool that destroyed the tradition of political neutrality so painstakingly erected over the years."⁷² I would add that the military had always been under subjective civilian control and that what Harris describes is subjective control taken to the extreme.

One day after the intervention, U.S. Ambassador to Turkey Fletcher Warren paid an office call on General Gürsel. In a cable to the U.S. State Department, Warren relates what he told Gürsel.

⁷² George Harris, "The Causes of the 1960 Revolution in Turkey," *The Middle East Journal* 24, no. 4 (1970): 451.

One big reason why Turkey was important to [the] free world, particularly the U.S. was its stability, and the Turk[ish] army tradition of not intervening in political affairs. By its coup yesterday [the] Turkish military had broken with that tradition....I felt this morning that neither [the] military nor [the] people of Turkey had any conception of what Turkey had done yesterday morning....I felt [that] in [the] future [the] military would find it exceedingly difficult not to become involved [in] any divisive political controversy that might involve [the] Turk[ish] people....The military by its coup has removed one of Turkey's principal qualifications for our present free world grouping.⁷³

By taking that fatal step, the Turkish military had set a precedent of military intervention that would repeat itself on two more occasions. However, the nature of the 27 May coup was unique in that it was a coup of junior officers. Gürsel, who had resigned as commander of the land forces just prior to the coup due to his dissatisfaction with the ruling party, was recruited at the last minute to give legitimacy to the officers' action. The 27 May coup also demonstrated the factionalization in the Turkish military at the time. The NUC was large for a ruling junta with 38 members. Shortly after assuming power, personal differences concerning the method and length of rule among the officers were exposed and fourteen of the officers were later purged because of their hardline views. These officers wanted to stay in power longer to enact revolutionary reforms, whereas Gürsel was intent on returning power to the civilians once the political situation was corrected. There was also a division between the NUC and the regular military. Many senior-ranking officers considered the young officers of the NUC to be insubordinate in their new positions. Gürsel kept his promise and free elections were held one year later. While in power, Gürsel was instrumental in effecting a purge of the

⁷³ United States Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960*, Vol. X, Part 2 (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1993): 846-847.

senior ranks of the military, which had expanded enormously under the Menderes government. In the constitution of 1961, the ruling junta assured that a National Security Council would be formed that would consist of civilian officials and military commanders to provide recommendations to the Council of Ministers on matters of national security. This institution is still in place today and is one of the ways in which the military exercises its influence in political matters.

The 27 May coup occurred twenty-two years after Atatürk's death. Junior officers were still inspired by Atatürk's words to the Turkish youth and his farewell speech to the armed forces. These officers felt that the Democrat Party had degraded the dignity of the armed forces by not raising the officer salaries and by trying to pit the armed forces against the opposition in an internal security role. Although none of the members of the NUC had a comprehensive plan of how to run the country once in power, all of them agreed that removing the Menderes government was in the best interest of the nation.

B. MORE MILITARY INTERVENTION: 12 MARCH 1971 AND 12 SEPTEMBER 1980

1. Coup by Memorandum

The military coup of 1971 differed from that of 1960 in that there was no direct military rule. After having carried out a successful coup eleven years prior, the mere threat of military intervention was sufficient to keep successive civilian leaders cautious of their actions. This was the method in which the military toppled the government of Süleyman Demirel, leader of the Justice Party (JP), which was the successor of the outlawed DP in 1960. The events that led up to the military's "coup by memorandum"

that it presented to the president were filled with political bickering and violence. In the memorandum military leaders "warned civilian officials that the armed forces would be compelled to take over the administration of the state once again" unless the government enacted needed social and economic reforms and put a stop to domestic violence.⁷⁴ Prime Minister Demirel resigned the same day.

Once again the generals showed the civilian leadership that they were the guardian of Atatürk's ideals. However, two years later in 1973, with such a high degree of influence in domestic politics, the military leadership was confident that its candidate Faruk Gürler would win the presidency. Gürler was a former Chief of the General Staff. However, this time the civilians bested the military by electing an elderly retired admiral named Fahri Korutürk as president. The military was humiliated, but accepted the decision.⁷⁵

In September 1974, Turkish forces landed on the island of Cyprus to protect the Turkish Cypriot minority following a successful coup d'état by conspirators backed by Greece, who were intent on uniting the island with Greece. As a result of this action, which Turkey considered to be in accordance with the treaty of guarantee it signed with England and Greece, the United States imposed an arms embargo on Turkey that lasted until 1979. Currently, approximately 30,000 Turkish troops are stationed on the northern one-third of the island and their continued presence has caused a great deal of unrest in the international community.

⁷⁴ Helen Chapin Metz (ed.), *Turkey: A Country Study* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1996), 49.

⁷⁵ See Roger P. Nye, "Civil-Military Confrontation in Turkey: The 1973 Presidential Election," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 8 (1977): 209-228.

2. The Generals' Coup

Almost another decade would pass before the military would determine that the principles of Kemalism were in enough danger to warrant another intervention. This time the operation was orchestrated in an impressive manner. Kenan Evren was the Chief of the General Staff at the time of the coup and his staff had secretly been working on such a plan for quite some time. The 1970s were marked with factionalism and ideological polarization in Turkey. Turkish citizens were becoming the victims of political violence on a daily basis. The military requested to act but was unable to unless the proper legislation was passed. Evren had been conducting inspections of his units and surveying the commanders as to how they felt about an intervention. Once the decision to intervene was made, detailed plans were drawn up by the General Staff and copies of the operations order for the coup were distributed to the field, only to be recalled because of a delay in execution and the possibility of a compromise due to the imminent retirement of officers familiar with the plan.⁷⁶

The coup was finally executed in a well-orchestrated manner on 12 September 1980 and became known as the "General's Coup". The ruling junta was called the National Security Council—not to be confused with the constitutional institution--and was composed of five members: Evren, his service chiefs, and the gendarmerie commander. Once again the military leadership promised to hand control of the government back to the civilians as soon as order had been restored. This time it would take three years. In 1982, a constitution was drawn up which was more restrictive than the liberal constitution of 1961. Evren was elected president in 1983 and served a seven-

year term. Contrary to the military's expectations, Turgut Özal's Motherland Party (MP) won the majority in the elections of 1983 and he served as prime minister until succeeding Evren to the presidency in 1989.

C. FROM THE MILITARY RULE OF 1980 TO THE PRESENT

1. The National Security Council and Constitution of 1982

As previously mentioned the National Security Council was written into the 1961 constitution so that the military would have a voice in national security policy. It has equal representation of civilian and military personnel consisting of the prime minister, the Chief of the General Staff, the ministers of national defense, interior and foreign affairs, the service commanders of the armed forces and the gendarmerie. Its charter is to make recommendations to the Council of Ministers on matters of national security for priority consideration. It has been noted that the recommendations of the NSC have rarely been rejected. This institution was instrumental in the removal of Islamist Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan from power in 1997.

The provisions of the 1982 constitution are still in effect. Many critics feel that the constitution is in need of reform to reflect the present conditions in Turkey. The restrictive nature of the document was perhaps necessary at the time to restore public order, but it is currently considered to be a leftover from martial law. Its obsolescence has been pointed out by elements within the country that have pushed for human rights legislation.

⁷⁶ Birand, 144-145.

2. The Fight Against Kurdish Separatism

The fight against the terrorist Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) organization began in 1984. Led by Abdullah Öcalan, a Marxist-Leninist, the PKK has been fighting ever since for the establishment of an independent Kurdistan within southeastern Turkey, although there have been times in which the PKK has spoken of solving the problem through political means. Initially a police action, the military became more and more involved as time passed and the number of victims grew. This mission is compatible with the military's charter to defend the country against internal as well as external threats to the unity and integrity of the country. Military forces worked in conjunction with the gendarmerie to combat the PKK. This type of guerilla warfare was a significant departure from the deliberate defense envisioned for the Turkish military in NATO plans. As a result of the struggle, the Turkish military has invested more money in special operations forces, to include psychological operations units, as distinct from commando units, to meet the threat. The capture of Öcalan in 1999 helped the military's cause considerably. As the struggle against the PKK appears to be coming to a close, the military leadership is convinced that the maintenance of stability through the development of the region is the responsibility of the civilian leaders.

3. The Gulf War: Military Finally Back Under Civilian Control?

Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990 posed some unique challenges for Turkey. The Iran-Iraq War of the 1980s had benefited the Turkish economy to the degree that the amount of trade Turkey had with both of the countries increased considerably.⁷⁷

⁷⁷ Henri J. Barkey, "The Silent Victor: Turkey's Role in the Gulf War," in *The Iran-Iraq War*, ed. Ephaim Karsh (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989), 135.

Turkey had always considered itself surrounded by potentially hostile neighbors, but had sought good relations following Atatürk's advice on foreign policy: "Peace at home, peace in the world." As U.S. President Bush was forming a Western coalition to defend Saudi Arabia and eject the Iraqis out of Kuwait, Turkey was a logical choice to turn to for support. Turgut Özal had just become president and he was courting the West. In 1987 Özal appointed General Necip Torumtay to the position of Chief of the General Staff. According to the seniority system the military had utilized for years as a system of advancement, Torumtay was not next in line for the job. When Özal announced Torumtay's appointment, he claimed it to be a great civilian victory over the military.⁷⁸ Torumtay was known to be a "professional" general without political aspirations. As the Gulf crisis unfolded Torumtay became upset with the way that Özal single-handedly handled matters, to the exclusion of the General Staff, the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This behavior on the part of Özal led to Torumtay's resignation, along with the resignations of the defense and foreign ministers. While serving as Chief of the General Staff, Torumtay was distraught at not having received any policy directive concerning the crisis. He felt that the decision-making mechanism of the government was inoperable. He was also concerned with Özal's rhetoric that advocated hostile action against Iraq, which Turkey was neither militarily, nor politically, prepared for. In the end, Turkey allowed the use of Incirlik airbase for coalition air operations and did not send a contingent to the Gulf. By not intervening in politics at this juncture, it was assumed that the military had finally recognized civilian supremacy. Torumtay's resignation demonstrated his professionalism in a difficult situation. In 1994, he

⁷⁸ Sakallıoğlu, 162.

published his memoirs, in which he recalls his military career and describes the events that led to his resignation. Throughout the book Torumtay highlights events such as war games and professional seminars in which the civilian leadership did not send the right people to participate. He concludes that participation in these types of events would have strengthened civil-military relations and improved crisis management skills.⁷⁹

The Gulf War was a wakeup call for the Turkish military elite. As a result of its operations against the PKK and other border control responsibilities in other parts of the country, the military was not ready to take on any other major missions without sufficient time to prepare. This shortcoming led to a reorganization of the military, with an emphasis on smaller, more mobile formations. As far as the its air force is concerned, Turkey continues to provide base support and participate in the policing of the northern no-fly zone over Iraq as part of operation NORTHERN WATCH.

4. The Post-Cold War Vacuum

Following the Cold War, Turkey faced a policy dilemma. The Soviet Union had dissolved, and although Russia could present a potential threat to Turkey, it was preoccupied with its own internal problems. As other NATO countries were reducing the size of their forces, the Turkish military was operating at about the same level, even increasing its defense expenditures to modernize the force. It was still preoccupied with the internal struggle against the PKK, and was maintaining its presence on Cyprus. There was no sign of a peace dividend in sight. Perhaps worse yet, the Western allies did not seem to acknowledge this fact and sought to reduce aid to Turkey.

⁷⁹ Necip Torumtay, *General Torumtayın Anıları (General Torumtay's Memoirs)* (Istanbul: Milliyet Yayınları, 1994),

For fear that it would lose the position it held in state affairs and the international arena, the military ran an active campaign of promoting itself. This took a number of forms. Internally, the military wanted to end the battle with the PKK. It promoted its humanitarian activities in Turkey's southeast, sponsored photo exhibits displaying PKK atrocities, implemented human rights training for the soldiers earmarked for deployment to the southeast and emphasized the responsibility of the government to develop the region. To counter the popularity of political Islam and reactionary activities brought about by the assumption of power of the Welfare Party, the military formed a West Working Group within the General Staff headquarters to track Islamic activity.⁸⁰ It presented briefings to various civilian groups about Islamist attempts to found a state based on Islamic law. It signed military cooperation agreements with over 30 countries and established especially close military ties with Israel. Additionally, the military took the lead in regional security initiatives such as the Southeastern Europe Brigade (SEEBRIG) and the Black Sea naval force. The main motivation for these actions was a concern of being marginalized by the West and excluded from the European security establishment. Lastly, the military worked hard to establish a domestic defense industrial base that would be able to satisfy its needs and allow for export of its products to other countries.

a. The Enemy within: Political Islam, Reactionary Activities and the PKK

Political Islam and reactionary activities reached their zenith in Turkey over the last five years with the coming to power of Necmettin Erbakan's Islamist

⁸⁰ *Milliyet*, 13 June 1997.

Welfare Party and by the discovery of atrocities committed by a mysterious terrorist group known as Turkish Hezbollah. Turkey's military elite, entrenched in the Western, secular ideology laid out by Atatürk, declared that reactionary activities and separatist terrorism in the form of the PKK constituted the two greatest threats to the national security of the republic.⁸¹ This declaration was a significant departure from the past in which Turkey's national security was threatened externally by the Soviet Union along NATO's southeastern flank. Having identified the Islamist threat with the assistance of a newly formed *ad hoc* organization in the General Staff known as the West Working Group, the military chiefs set about on a campaign of propaganda to make lawmakers, intellectuals, and the media aware of the scope of this danger and the relationship between the political Islam employed by the Welfare Party and reactionary activities. The National Security Council, thought to be the military's most powerful means of influencing the political situation in Turkey because of its equal number of representatives on the council to that of civilian officials, met on 28 February 1997 and issued a document containing 20 points which required immediate attention. Of those 20 points 18 pertained to the curbing of political Islam and reactionary activities. Shortly after this document was made public, Necmettin Erbakan, who was sharing power with center-right True Path Party leader, Tansu Ciller, in a coalition that was formed in June 1996, resigned from the office of prime minister nearly a year after he had assumed the position. His party was later shut down by the Constitutional Court and he was banned from politics for a period of five years. The successor to the Welfare Party is the Virtue

⁸¹ Ibid., 30 April 1997

Party and its recent criticism of the military over perceived inaction regarding Turkish Hezbollah may also lead to its demise.

A few definitions are in order. Political Islam is simply defined as the use of religion (in this case Islam) for political purposes. Reactionary activities (*irtica*) are activities undertaken by fundamentalist Islamists that are considered backward or contrary to progress in the Western sense. Given the fact that the military is the guardian of Atatürk's Western orientation, both political Islam and reactionary activities are considered threats to the secular state. The ultimate goal of these actions, in spite of rhetoric to the contrary, is the establishment of an Islamic state based upon the *sharia* or Islamic law.

Although Islamists identified with other political parties such as the Justice Party prior to 1970, it was not until the formation of the National Order Party at this time that a party with explicitly Islamist goals came into being. The NOP was shut down in 1971 following a military coup because "the party wanted to alter the secular principles of the state and institute an Islamic order,"⁸² according to the Constitutional Court. The successor party, Necmettin Erbakan's National Salvation Party, survived the turbulent years of 1972 to 1980 in which Turkey was polarized into extreme right and left factions that committed acts of violence on an almost daily basis. The NSP was also shut down following a military coup, this time the generals' coup of 12 September 1980. The Welfare Party was formed in 1983 and lasted until 1998. During this period the Islamists enjoyed the greatest degree of success in infiltrating the state structure. In a coalition

⁸² M. Hakan Yavuz, "Political Islam and the Welfare (*Refah*) Party in Turkey," *Comparative Politics* 30 (October 1997): 66.

with Tansu Ciller's True Path Party, Erbakan was able to serve as prime minister from June 1996 until he resigned in June 1997.

The question inevitably arises as to how the Islamists were able to gain so much popularity in the 1980s and 1990s. Interestingly enough, the military played a key role in allowing the Islamists to increase their base of support. This occurred following the military coup of 12 September 1980, in which the military implemented martial law and put an end to the political violence that was caused by almost a decade of factional clashes. In order to mitigate the appeal of leftist ideologies, it was determined that a state-imposed form of "soft Islam" was the answer. The ideology, known as the Turkish-Islamic Synthesis was developed by the Association of Intellectuals Hearth at the ruling military council's request. It used Ottoman, Islamic and Turkish popular culture to legitimize the ruling elite. The intent was the Islamization of national identity to reunite an ideologically fragmented society. This state-centered Turkish-Islamic consciousness was disseminated to the masses using the educational system and the media. The Directorate of Religious Affairs, a state ministry, was also responsible for the nationalization of Islam, by spreading information on the dangers of the PKK, for example. The hope was that this form of "soft Islam" would incorporate Muslims into the system. The practical outcome of the Turkish-Islamic synthesis was an increase in the number of Imam-Hatip schools, Quranic teaching seminaries, and Islamic private colleges and high schools. These types of education allowed more Islamists to enter the state bureaucracy.⁸³

⁸³ Ibid., 67-69.

Necmettin Erbakan became prime minister on 28 June 1996 during a time in which Turkey had warmed its relations with Israel. Although Erbakan was blatantly anti-Jewish, he was astute enough to realize that his ability to stay in power rested upon good relations with the military. He did not interfere in military cooperation and trade agreements that were signed between the two countries.⁸⁴ Other actions on the part of Erbakan and his party, however, enraged the military leaders. It is believed that the military's disenchantment with Erbakan began in August 1996, when he attempted to interfere in the affairs of the Supreme Military Council, an institution historically known for its autonomy.⁸⁵ The military was in the process of discharging a number of its personnel for reactionary activities. Erbakan wanted the Supreme Military Council to come under scrutiny, but in the end signed the document authorizing the discharges.

Other examples of these actions were Erbakan's inviting Sufi leaders to his official residence to partake in the *iftar* meal during the holy month of Ramadan, advocating the building of a large mosque in downtown Istanbul, continued debate about the wearing of headscarves by females in official places and inflammatory speeches rendered by Welfare Party officials with Islamic overtones, an increase in Islamic capital, and the events which surrounded a "Jerusalem Night" rally in the suburb of Sincan on the outskirts of Ankara.

In response to the Islamists, the military declared reactionary activities followed by separatist PKK terrorism to be the two major threats to Turkey's national security. In its declaration, the military leadership emphasized its obligation to assess

⁸⁴ Washington Institute of Near East Policy, "Erbakan on the Ropes," *Policywatch* # 239 (12 March 1997).

internal as well as external threats to national security. In a historic session of the National Security Council a 20 point plan of reform inspired by the military leaders was recommended which included *inter alia*: enforcement of dress codes and the banning of Sufi brotherhoods; reversal of the growth of religious schools and infiltration of Islamists into the bureaucracy, restrictions on the Welfare Party such as limits on cash transactions by Islamist groups and acceptance of party responsibility for the anti-secular behavior of its members; and monitoring Iranian efforts to destabilize Turkey.⁸⁶

The much publicized Jerusalem Night rally held in Sincan in late January 1997 and the military's response to it deserve some attention. This occasion which was sponsored by the town council and its Islamist mayor was an occasion [that] "offered the chance to exorcise both Israel and the Arab-Israeli peace process. On a stage featuring a large picture of Fathi Shiqaqi, late leader of the terrorist group Islamic Jihad, politicians, activists, and the guest of honor—Iran's ambassador to Turkey—launched into a predictable and well-received tirade."⁸⁷ The outcome of this event was the arrest of the town's mayor and his dismissal from office and the expulsion of the Iranian ambassador from Turkey. The day following the event a convoy of military vehicles, which included tanks and armored personnel carriers originating from the Armored Unit Training Center nearby, rolled through the streets of Sincan on a routine "training exercise". The message was clear: the military would not tolerate such activity.

⁸⁵ *Milliyet*, 28 February 2000.

⁸⁶ Washington Institute of Near East Policy, "Erbakan on the Ropes," *Policywatch* # 239 (12 March 1997).

⁸⁷ Pipes, 31.

Within the Turkish General Staff headquarters a committee called the “West Working Group” was established to track Islamist activity supported by the outside. It was headed up by the General Staff Chief of Operations, a three-star general, responsible for directing the efforts of selected staff officers. The group’s title originated from the “struggles against reactionary elements of the Turkish populace which are supported by certain Islamic countries—primarily Iran—attempting to distance Turkey from the Western civilization that Ataturk advocated.”⁸⁸ Following the ouster of the Welfare Party from power in mid-1997, the Office of the Prime Ministry established an organization similar to the West Working Group.

In June 1997 the General Staff presented a series of briefings to members of the press, university presidents, educators, public administrators and civil society organizations about the threat of political Islam and reactionary activities. It distributed a pamphlet entitled “The Spread of Political Islam,” in which it claimed that if the popularity of political Islam were to increase at its current rate, parties such as the Welfare Party, by taking advantage of voters with religious training, would capture 34% of the vote in the year 2000 parliamentary elections; by 2005 the figure would increase to 66.9%.⁸⁹ It was also alleged that the military leadership issued a directive to its personnel to boycott goods and services of companies identified with the Islamists.⁹⁰

All of these actions contributed to Erbakan’s resignation. He was in the classic position of losing his constituency if he did not preach the Islamist hard line.

⁸⁸ *Milliyet*, 13 June 1997.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 26 January 2000.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 6 June 1997.

However, by doing so he only increased the military's desire to remove him from power, when he did not attempt to moderate his policy. As a member of the National Security Council, his signing of the February 28 document sealed his fate. This action by the military has been labeled a "soft coup" and Erbakan resigned on 18 June 18 1997. He is temporarily banned from politics. The Welfare Party was banned in January 1998. Its successor, the Virtue Party, was formed in December 1997 and assumed much of the leadership of the Welfare Party.

Turkish Hezbollah is one of a number of small radical Islamic groups operating in Turkey. The name itself is a misnomer, one that was given to the group by Turkish security forces and picked up by the media to describe its goal of establishing a state based upon the *sharia*, similar to the Iranian model. The organization is perhaps better described under the heading of the Turkish Islamic Movement. Its center of gravity is the eastern part of Turkey and involves primarily the Kurdish population. In fact, one member of the organization, who was apprehended, described its objective as establishing a Kurdish Islamic state. Recent operations by Turkish security forces indicate that the group's zone of operations is more extensive. Ersel Aydinli explains recent developments: "Turkish Hizbullah [*sic*] reportedly aimed to create an independent Kurdish Islamic state in the southeast of Turkey, using mosques as sites for organization and recruitment, while maintaining safehouses throughout the country for the purposes of interrogation, executions and the burying of victims. In these houses, the bodies of victims who were buried alive after being gruesomely tortured have been found. To date

[February 2000], more than sixty of these bodies have been recovered, with hundreds more expected.”⁹¹

Public outrage over the brutal methods of Hezbollah have led Islamists to criticize the military for not identifying and eradicating Hezbollah earlier. Allegations have been made that Hezbollah previously was employed by the state in combating the PKK, its natural rival due to its Marxist-Leninist ideology. On 25 January 2000 the General Chairman of the Islamist Virtue Party asked: “Why were the tanks that were employed against seven accused persons in Sincan not used instead against Hezbollah terrorists?”⁹² Other voices asked why Hezbollah was not mentioned in the General Staff’s briefings on reactionary activities. The military’s response was that organizations such as the Virtue Party and its Islamist predecessors were responsible for the existence of radical groups such as Hezbollah. Moreover, it contended that it had, in fact, mentioned the threat of radical groups such as Hezbollah, but this information fell on deaf ears. What resulted from this were the terrible atrocities committed by Hezbollah, which political Islam had engendered.

In an interview with *Milliyet* newspaper, retired admiral and former commander of the Turkish Navy during the 28 February process (of which he is recognized as the architect), Güven Erkaya asserts that a briefing was given to the prime minister and related institutions at the time on how Hezbollah had infiltrated state organs and mosques.⁹³ The briefing was based upon intelligence gathered by the West Working

⁹¹ Washington Institute of Near East Policy, “Implications of Turkey’s Anti-Hizbullah Operations,” *Policywatch* # 439 (February 9, 2000).

⁹² Turkish General Staff Press Release #2, 26 January 2000.

⁹³ *Milliyet*, 22 February 2000.

Group. Also, a General Staff press release stated that the necessary information concerning radical groups like Hezbollah and the Great Eastern Islamic Fighter Front had been provided earlier.⁹⁴ Referring to a connection between the Turkish Armed Forces and Hezbollah, Erkaya dismisses any such link, maintaining that the Turkish Armed Forces are quite capable of conducting guerilla operations themselves, which implies that they do not need Hezbollah to fight on their behalf. Erkaya questioned Hezbollah's effectiveness against the (combat-hardened) PKK if the assertion that Hezbollah is a tool of the state is true.⁹⁵

It is interesting to note that there is not a great deal of information on radical Turkish Islamist groups available, probably due to their small sizes. However, a 1991 report of the Turkish National Police and the Security Directorate General of the Police named 10 radical Islamist organizations in Turkey: Turkish Islamic Liberation Army (IKO), Turkish Islamic Liberation Front (TIK-C), Fighters of the Islamic Revolution (IDAM), Turkish Islamic Liberation Union (TIKB), World Sharia Liberation Army (DSKO), Universal Brotherhood Front-Sharia Revenge Squad (EKC-SIM), Islamic Liberation Party Front (IKP-C), Turkish Fighters of the Universal Islamic War of Liberation (EIK-TM), Turkish Islamic Fighters Army (IMO) and Turkish Sharia Revenge Commandos (TSIK).⁹⁶ The common thread that binds all of these groups is the goal of founding an Islamic state.

⁹⁴ Turkish General Staff Press Release #2, 26 January 2000.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ely Karmon, "Radical Islamic Political Groups in Turkey," *MERIA* 4 (January 1998): 2-3.

Information concerning whether a link between the Refah and Virtue Party and radical Islamic terrorist organizations is sketchy, however, there appears to be some positive correlation. In his article "Radical Islamic Political Groups in Turkey" Ely Karmon writes: "Erbakan condemned the violence used in the assassination of journalist [Ugur] Mumcu in March 1993 and declared that it is incompatible with the values of true Islam. But at the same time important members of his party accused Israel for killing him."⁹⁷ Of note is the fact that up until late 1995 leading Islamists "denied even the existence of fundamental terrorist organizations [in Turkey]." ⁹⁸ However, an examination of the company Erbakan kept while in power is revealing: representatives of Palestinian Hamas, Egypt's Muslim Brothers and Algeria's FIS.

Turning to Fethullah Gülen, one finds mixed opinions on his intentions. Scholars such as Mehmet Hakan Yavuz argue that he could be a force that will reconcile Islam with democracy in Turkey. Senior military officials retired or on active duty are wary of the origins of his economic base, which allows him to fund Islamic schools throughout Turkey, the Balkans and Central Asia. It is essential to examine his person and what he has accomplished to date to form a better opinion.

Fethullah Gülen was born in Erzurum in eastern Turkey, a traditionally conservative area. He is a proponent of the Nurcu movement that receives its name from Said Nursi (1876-1960), "the founder of the most powerful text-based faith movement in Turkey."⁹⁹ Nursi's most famous work is known as the *Epistle of Light*. The Nurcu

⁹⁷ Ibid., 7.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 8.

⁹⁹ M.Hakan Yavuz, "Search for a New Social Contract in Turkey: Fethullah Gulen, the Virtue Party and the Kurds," *SAIS Review* 19 (Winter-Spring 1999) : 120.

movement “seeks to move Islam from an oral-based tradition to a print –based medium and to raise religious consciousness through education and reason.”¹⁰⁰ The Nurcus believe in the compatibility of democracy and Islam and consider democracy and freedom to be essential elements of a just society.

With an emphasis on reason, Nursi set up a number of reading rooms or *dershanes* throughout Turkey. Currently their number is up to 5,000 with largely university students participating in reading Nursi’s writings. The number of Nurcus is estimated to be between two and six million. Gülen continues the tradition of *dershanes* and has expanded the network. Gülen and his followers are distinguished from other Nurcu groups in that they stress “nationalism, the free market and education.”¹⁰¹

Gülen’s base of support is through business networks and the media. In addition to controlling a number of printed media, Islamist TV and radio stations, Gülen’s community possesses Asya Finans, a rapidly growing financial institution. Its focus is on “molding a cohesive and disciplined community through education, mass media, and financial networks.”¹⁰² An area in which he has enjoyed enormous success is that of education. His community has founded over five hundred high schools and seven universities. Students in Gülen’s schools in Turkey do relatively better than in state schools. Due to his emphasis on Turkish nationalism, most of Gülen’s schools outside of Turkey are located in the Balkans and Central Asia.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 121.

¹⁰² Ibid., 123.

Gülen's movement has been one described as mixing "tradition and modernity." He is open to dialogue and has met with such religious dignitaries as Pope Paul II and the head of the Orthodox Fener Patriarchate in Istanbul. In his Declaration of Abant of July 1998, Gülen tried to "establish a synthesis for the understanding of secularism and religion in Turkey."¹⁰³ It has been noted, however, that his followers have not quite caught up with this transition to modernity. Schools still tend to be segregated by gender and women are not afforded high-level positions within the community. Lastly, Gülen is a counterbalance to the Virtue Party, siding with the state. He is of the belief that "Islam is the religion of the nation and should not be reduced to being the identity of one party."¹⁰⁴

Political scientist M. Hakan Yavuz contends that the military and bureaucratic elite are attempting to boycott Islamist businesses (the managers of which form a counter-elite) in Turkey and has also made Gülen a target of their campaign. He contends that "the generals are destroying the basic precepts of Turkish democracy, and in the process, fomenting a common, radical Islamic front."¹⁰⁵ The generals on the other hand are suspicious of Gülen and what appears to be his anti-state rhetoric despite his claim to the contrary. In a briefing given by the General Staff to President Demirel in March 1998, a great deal of attention was given to Gülen and the Nurcu movement. According to the General Staff assessment, although Gülen appears to be liberal and democratic, "there is no distinction between the Nurcus and other groups guided by

¹⁰³ Ibid., 125.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 126.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 119.

political Islam in Turkey, whose long term aim is an Islamic state.”¹⁰⁶ With a reference to the proliferation of his schools outside of Turkey, it was added that Gülen is conducting an encirclement operation from outside. Retired Admiral Güven Erkaya foresees Gülen as a huge threat to Turkey in the future. He feels that Gülen is on the road to increasing his own political power and cassettes have been found that confirm this suspicion. Erkaya wonders where the money is coming from to finance an anticipated 50 universities and 500 private schools in the next five years.¹⁰⁷

In the view of the military elite, enough has not been done to date to curb the threat of political Islam and reactionary activities, other than the enactment of eight-year continuous education for children, which is meant to limit the influence of the Koran schools. Problems still exist with radical Islamic groups, the flow of illegal Islamic capital both within Turkey and from outside the country, and issues such as the wearing of the headscarf for women. This issue recently came to head when Merve Kavakci of the Virtue Party was refused to take her oath of office in the Turkish Grand National Assembly because she was wearing a headscarf. The short-term assessment is that there will continue to be a clash between the military leadership, political Islam and reactionary activities in whatever form they may exist.

Turkish military operations against the PKK have been successful to date. The capture of PKK chief Abdullah Öcalan and his subsequent call for PKK members to turn themselves in have been positive developments. The military and internal security forces have worked together in the southeast to root out the terrorists. Additionally,

¹⁰⁶ *Milliyet*, 19 March 1998.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 2 February 2000.

large-scale cross-border operations have been conducted by the military into northern Iraq to destroy PKK camps.

The problem with the PKK affected Turkish military doctrine, which was focused on larger operations in the context of NATO war plans. Literature has appeared in the last few years detailing the conduct of these operations as related by personnel that participated in them. The first of these is entitled *Stories from the Southeast (Güneydoğudan Öyküleri)*, in which the author presents vignettes of soldiers who saw action there. Themes revolve around homesickness, the loss of fellow soldiers, the conduct of ambushes and contact with the local population. No names are mentioned in the book. The book received such popularity that a second volume of the same name was published.

In 1999, another book, entitled *Mehmet's Book (Mehmet'in Kitabı)*, written by Nadire Mater, was published and received severe criticism from the General Staff. The name "Mehmet" is customarily applied to the average soldier. The book is a narrative account of interviews conducted with over 40 conscript soldiers and lieutenants that served in the southeast from 1984 to the present. The interviewees, who remain anonymous, were frank in their descriptions of operations in the southeast and cooperated with author (who received them as referrals) because they believed there was a story to be told.

These developments are relatively new to Turkey and they express the public's desire to be informed about state affairs. The military leadership views such literature as an attack on its professionalism, whenever the ugly side of such a conflict is portrayed. In fact, the General Staff called for the banning of the book, after which it was

removed from bookstore shelves. On the light side, however, remarks from the soldiers lead to the conclusion that they felt like they received adequate training for the mission, even though the prospect of anti-guerilla operations within Turkey may have been a bit awkward.

The war against the PKK brought about a number of innovations within the Army. Parachute and commando units have played an important role in the Turkish force structure and performed well in the 1974 Cyprus intervention. However, the fight with the PKK prompted the military to create and use special forces and psychological operations assets in the fight against the PKK.

b. Active Foreign Policy

The Turkish military is actively involved in influencing Turkey's foreign policy. Manifestations of this are the emphasis it put on establishing military-to-military relations with Israel during Erbakan's time in office. It appeared to have been a chance for the military to show its political might against a politician with an anti-Israeli stance and to protect the political autonomy of the military leadership. The General Staff's success in obtaining over 30 bilateral agreements on defense cooperation is an impressive indicator of its influence in foreign policy. The General Staff has also taken the lead on establishing regional security organizations and participating in peacekeeping operations.

In order to maintain the recognition it had during the Cold War and prevent the diversion of NATO resources to the Eastern European countries included in NATO expansion, the Turkish military elite developed a number of initiatives. These security initiatives illustrate Turkey's paranoia with its potential alienation from the West, primarily from central Europe. These include defense and military cooperation

agreements with over 30 countries; taking the lead in the establishment of a Black Sea Force (BLACKSEAFOR) for joint humanitarian operations in the Black Sea area and in the formation of a Southeastern Europe Brigade (SEEBRIG)—commonly referred to as the Balkan peacekeeping force--among primarily Balkan countries to conduct peacekeeping and humanitarian operations in the region at the behest of NATO or the Western European Union (WEU) as the EU's security component; and the establishment of a Partnership for Peace (PfP) Training Center in Ankara.¹⁰⁸ Additionally, Turkey wants the role of mediator in bringing on board the Central Asian republics as part of PfP and—because of its historical ties--wants to have a lead role in a productive dialogue between NATO and Israel, Jordan, Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia and Mauritania in the framework of NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue program.¹⁰⁹ Turkey's more significant contributions to recent regional activities were its participation in April 1997 in multilateral humanitarian relief efforts led by Italy during operation ALBA in Albania with approximately 850 marines and a two-star deputy commander to the mission¹¹⁰; the participation of Turkish aircraft in the air war against Serbia and use of bases in Turkey for NATO combat aircraft to conduct a multidirectional attack against Serbian targets; and the deployment of a battalion-sized task force which incorporates platoons from Azerbaijan and Georgia, trained in Turkey prior to deployment, serving with NATO's Kosovo force (KFOR) since the termination of the air campaign.¹¹¹ These activities highlight the degree to which

¹⁰⁸ Alan Makovsky, "The New Activism of Turkish Foreign Policy", *The National Interest* 19, no. 1 (1999): 105.

¹⁰⁹ NATO Fact Sheet, "Mediterranean Dialogue," March 2000.

¹¹⁰ *Milliyet*, 16 April 1997.

¹¹¹ Turkish General Staff Fact Sheets entitled "Turkey's Units in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo", 10 February 2000 and "The Kosovo Operation," undated.

Turkey is committed to the Western alliance and European security. Moreover, it considers its post-Cold War role in this area to be that a security provider, while viewing Central Europeans as security consumers in what the Turkish General Staff refers to as a Velvet Curtain which exists between Turkey and Europe. A humorous graphic depiction of this phenomenon presented during briefings at the Turkish General Staff to high level foreign dignitaries shows a map of Europe in which a soldier is guarding Turkey's eastern border while a man located in central Europe is sleeping in a hammock.¹¹² Regardless of the degree of threat that actually exists, Turkey's military is attempting to underscore its role in a European security identity in order to avoid exclusion from the West. These gains may take the form of a shift of financial resources from central to southern Europe given the post-Cold War risks and uncertainties that surround Turkey or a reconsideration of its pending EU membership.

As previously mentioned, Turkey had experienced three military coups in two decades, spread out in ten-year intervals, which led up to the end of the Cold War. The mentality of the Cold War was to deter the Communist threat and military intervention in civilian affairs in the case of Turkey was not necessarily scorned upon by Western powers if the intervention was intended to terminate domestic instability and prevent the assumption of power by radical elements. It was not until the post-Cold War era in which the monolithic Soviet threat no longer existed that human rights and democratization assumed greater importance. The military returned to the barracks after each intervention, but its influence in politics was always present.

¹¹² My personal observation while attending these briefings as NATO liaison in Ankara between 1997-1999.

In fact, following the generals' coup of 12 September 1980, the mastermind of the coup, General Kenan Evren, who was the chief of the general staff at the time, changed into civilian clothes and became president of the republic by popular vote. Evren's executive assistant while he was chief of the general staff was Colonel Cevik Bir¹¹³, who would later become deputy chief of the general staff in the mid-1990s and spokesman for Turkey's role in the new world order; promoter of several regional security initiatives designed to prevent Turkey's marginalization by the West; and proponent of the development of a closer relationship with Israel on a military-to-military basis and the establishment of a strong domestic defense industrial base. Not insignificant is the fact that Bir served as commander of United Nations Operation in Somalia II (UNOSOM II) forces as a lieutenant general in 1993, the first Turkish general to assume command of a multinational force in a peacekeeping operation at such a high rank. The level of Turkish participation in this international peacekeeping operation was another sign of its identification with the West, particularly since the Somalia operation had such a heavy American presence.

Around the same time as the Somalia conflict, in support of its commitment to NATO, Turkey sent what evolved into a brigade-sized force to Bosnia-Herzegovina to assist in the enforcement of the Dayton peace agreement. This action is significant in that Turkey is the only member of NATO with both a 98% Muslim population and a historical association with the region. Western European NATO planners during the Cold War would never have imagined the critical role that a

¹¹³ Preston Hughes, *Atatürkçülük ve Türkiye'nin Demokratleşme Süreci* (İstanbul: Milliyet Yayın A.S., 1994), 194.

peripheral country such as Turkey could play in the establishment of peace so close to central Europe. Its brigade was employed in a predominately Muslim area of Bosnia because of its religious compatibility with the Bosniacs. Participation in this operation in support of its fellow Muslims was an easy sell to the Turkish masses, because although the Turkish force were there on a NATO mission and technically did not discriminate on the basis of ethnic origin, language or religion, it was located where the population was predominately Muslim. Of course, an argument could be made that the inclusion of a Turkish peace force in Bosnia would have disastrous effects due to the former centuries-long, mostly repressive, Ottoman rule over the Balkan Peninsula; however, current events have shown that the Turkish soldiers are warmly received in their mission and have contributed to the humanitarian effort by rebuilding civilian and religious facilities, building parks, providing medical care and celebrating religious holidays with the local population. Also, the Turkish brigade comes under the command and control of an American combat division, a command relationship it is comfortable with and which affords it a certain degree of prestige.¹¹⁴

Media reporting of Turkey's involvement in Kosovo was indicative of tension in civil-military relations and the military's influence in decisions to undertake such operations. In a Turkish General Staff fact sheet concerning the Kosovo operation, the general staff asserted that decisions which were made regarding the Turkish Armed Forces in NATO's Kosovo operation were completely in accordance with the constitution and Turkish laws. It went on to cite the authority for the formation of a battalion task

¹¹⁴ Turkish General Staff Fact Sheet, "Turkey's Units in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo," 10 February 2000.

force to assist in refugee repatriation as part of NATO's Kosovo Force (KFOR), the use of Turkish aircraft in offensive and defensive roles as part of the air campaign and the use of Turkish bases for NATO aircraft conducting operations in the theater, and military support to humanitarian assistance in Albania. The document goes on to state that "all of the activities were announced to the public in a timely manner."¹¹⁵ A similar fact sheet was produced by the general staff in response to press reports to the contrary emphasizing the requirements for coordination on the use of Turkish armed forces and facilities in accordance with international commitments. It notes that final decisions are made at "the highest level in coordination and cooperation with the affected state agencies on important issues such as the deployment of forces outside of Turkey, the reception of foreign forces in Turkey, deployment of forces outside of Turkey, and permission for foreign combat aircraft to use Turkish bases."¹¹⁶ Both of these releases highlight the public perception that the military runs state affairs.

Regarding the recent proliferation of bilateral agreements between Turkey and its allies, there exist twenty-nine Friendship and Cooperation Agreements of which five Turkic states are included; twenty Military Training Technical and Scientific Cooperation Agreements; fifteen defense industry cooperation agreements; and thirty-three Military Training Cooperation Agreements. A Turkish General Staff fact sheet¹¹⁷ provides the details of the process of interagency coordination within Turkey that is

¹¹⁵ Turkish General Staff Fact Sheet, "Fact Sheet on the Kosovo Operation," undated.

¹¹⁶ Turkish General Staff Fact Sheet, undated and untitled.

¹¹⁷ Turkish General Staff Fact Sheet, "Turkey's Military Training Cooperation Activities," undated.

required to prepare such agreements; however, the influence of the military in this process is blatantly evident.

Both the BLACKSEAFOR and the Balkan Peacekeeping Force initiatives involve coordination between the participating countries at the state level and are advertised by Turkey as promoting regional cooperation; however, the nature of the multilateral alliances indicate the political power of the Turkish generals' and their intent for Turkey to remain a regional military power. Interestingly, these initiatives are technically outside of the scope of NATO and have a more specific regional orientation, that is, in the Black Sea and Balkan regions; however, at least in the case of the Balkan Peacekeeping Force, provisions have been made to allow the force to come under the control of NATO or the WEU for certain contingencies. In the case of NATO contingencies Turkey currently has a say at the political level because of its member status on NATO-led operations in which this force may participate, however, it is not a full member of the WEU and, even though its forces would technically be available for a WEU-led operation, it has no say at the political level. Perhaps these initiatives are a political ploy to force Turkey's WEU membership and press harder for inclusion in the EU. Turkish leaders argue that they cannot be part of the European security and defense identity (ESDI) without full membership in both the EU and the WEU.¹¹⁸

The PfP training center, established in Ankara on 29 June 1998, was a unilateral Turkish initiative to gain more recognition, both within NATO and among the countries that provide students to the center, of Turkey's commitment to regional peace

¹¹⁸ *Milliyet*, 17 March 2000

and stability.¹¹⁹ The PfP program was established by NATO in an effort to familiarize PfP member countries with the traditions of Western democracy, civilian control of the military, increase operability of these countries with NATO forces in humanitarian and peacekeeping missions—as non-members of the alliance proper they can not participate in collective defense of NATO territory—and assist them in their eventual inclusion in NATO. The first course covered the new security architecture, international organizations, the international decision-making process, and peacekeeping operations, among other things. It was attended by 37 senior military and civilian personnel from predominantly Eastern European and Central Asian countries. As a demonstration of its support to the initiative, NATO headquarters sent a major general as guest speaker to the opening ceremony.

Prior to the official opening of the center, Turkey had been providing training to former members of the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact. One example of this assistance has been the training of 1,228 Bosniac and 691 Croatian armor and artillery personnel from the federal armed forces of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Between 1994 and 1996, 354 military personnel from Albania received training in Turkey. An additional 222 personnel were scheduled for the academic years 1998-1999. As of the fall of 1999, 456 personnel from Azerbaijan, 212 from Turkmenistan, 90 from Kazakhstan and 46 personnel from Kyrgyzstan were receiving training in Turkey. Of the countries with which Turkey has military training cooperation agreements, the Turkish government has financed the training and education costs for the personnel for thirteen of them.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 29 June 29 1998.

Perhaps the most controversial of these agreements and an indicator of the Turkish military's commitment to a Western orientation is its recent warming of relations with Israel. Turkey has current agreements with Israel involving trade, military training cooperation and defense industrial cooperation. Turkey and Israel are alike in a number of ways: the enormous influence of the military in state affairs, the relative level of threat surrounding their respective countries, and ties to the United States and the West. With the signing of the Israeli-PLO accord in September 1993, Turkey was able to reconcile its traditional recognition of the Palestinian struggle that appealed to its religious masses with its civilian and military elites' continued maintenance of minimal ties with Israel due to its Western orientation. The PLO's recognition of the state of Israel allowed Turkey to strengthen its ties with Israel without offending its moderate Arab neighbors.

This relationship served a number of purposes for Turkey: it increased trade relations with the two countries; it allowed Turkey to build its domestic defense industrial base in cooperation with Israel; it provided Turkey an alternate supplier of arms and military equipment; and it gave Turkey more leverage with the U.S. Congress through the influence of the American Jewish lobby.¹²⁰ All of this worked to the benefit of the Turkish military elite in the pursuit of its modernization goals. This process was begun with Turkey's first-ever foreign ministerial visit to Israel in 1993 and was followed up a year later by Prime Minister Tansu Ciller's visit to Israel a year later.¹²¹ President Suleyman Demirel went to Tel Aviv in March of 1996 to sign bilateral agreements

¹²⁰ Makovsky, "The New Activism Turkish Foreign Policy," 8-9.

¹²¹ Alan Makovsky, "Israeli-Turkish Relations: A Turkish 'Periphery Strategy'?" in *Reluctant Neighbor: Turkey's Role in the Middle East*, ed. Henri J. Barkey Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1996), 151.

between the two countries. A sign of disapproval of this arrangement from the traditionally religious Turkish masses came when a Turkish citizen attempted to assassinate President Demirel later in the month when Demirel was visiting the town of Izmit.¹²²

Following Demirel's visit to Israel in 1996, the influence of the military elite in this relationship came to light. Several exchanges occurred between senior Turkish and Israeli military and civilian officials from the mid- to late 1990s. The military's designated spokesman was deputy chief of the general staff General Cevik Bir. On the agenda of military cooperation were events like the trilateral naval search-and-rescue exercise named RELIANT MERMAID, which the two countries conducted with the United States in the Eastern Mediterranean in 1998 and again in 1999, the joint sharing of each others' airspace for combat fighter training, Turkish contracts with Israeli firms to modernize its aging F-4 and F-5 fleets along with a number of joint ventures which include co-production of Popeye II air-to-ground missiles.

The zeal with which the Turkish military has cultivated this relationship has not been overwhelmingly embraced by Turkey's civilian elite. Although the prospects of this military cooperation appear promising, "the Turkish political and foreign policy establishment is less enthusiastic about military ties with Israel than are Turkey's generals."¹²³ However, Foreign Minister Ismail Cem reluctantly admitted: "The most important element of [Israeli-Turkish] cooperation is our collaboration in the

¹²² *Jewish Bulletin of Northern California*, 24 May 1996.

¹²³ Geoffrey Aronson, "The Demise of the 'New Middle East': Review and Analysis," *Foundation for Middle East Peace Special Report* (Autumn 1998): 9.

military industry.”¹²⁴ In late February 1997, General Ismail Karadayi, Chief of the General Staff, was the first senior Turkish military officer to visit Israel. His deputy, General Cevik Bir, was actively involved in promoting bilateral military cooperation and exchanged a number of visits with Israeli civilian and military personnel. Geoffery Aronson was uncertain of the nature of Bir’s character in representing Turkey for such issues.

Bir’s geostrategic vision of the region is among the most radical of Turkish military leaders and one of the most supportive of a strategic relationship with Israel. In close meetings, he stunned even enthusiastic supporters of the Israeli-Turkish relationship by his far-reaching vision of cooperation across the Caucasus and to the Gulf.¹²⁵

Bir has subsequently retired from the military in 1999 after serving as First Army Commander in Istanbul. Worthy of emphasis is the degree to which the military—advocates of modernization--has taken up the task of cultivating this relationship in the face of Arab opposition by Syria and Iraq. Jordan and Egypt have more or less recognized the inevitability of the relationship and Jordan even sent an admiral on two occasions to observe the exercise RELIANT MERMAID.

Israel has found a client with outstanding potential as the Turkish military plans on spending \$150 billion in the next 25 years on defense modernization. All of this is occurring at a time when other NATO forces are downsizing and cutting their defense budgets. As Alan Makovsky points out: “Between 1985 and 1995, Turkey’s defense expenditures more than doubled, in constant (1995) dollars, from \$3.1 billion to \$6.6

¹²⁴ Ibid., 6.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

billion.”¹²⁶ In comparison with other NATO countries during the same period, “annual NATO spending on equipment declined by nearly a quarter.”¹²⁷

c. Defense Industrial Complex

International events like the U.S. arms embargo of 1975 on Turkey because of its military intervention on Cyprus have led the military to seek more autonomy in defense industries. A law was passed in 1985 for the establishment of the Undersecretariat for Defense Industries (SSM), which is “a separate legal entity with a budget of its own.”¹²⁸ SSM is responsible for developing the national defense industry and supporting the modernization of the Turkish armed forces.

Large scale projects are financed by the Defense Industry Support Fund. This fund is extrabudgetary, which means that it is outside of the national budget process. Its annual revenue is approximately US \$1 billion “in shares from income and corporate taxes, levies and surcharges on the sales of tobacco products and alcoholic beverages, revenues from state lotteries and joint bets, and a certain percentage of fuel consumption tax.”¹²⁹

Decisions regarding execution of defense industry projects are taken by the Defense Industry Executive Committee, which consists of the Prime Minister, the Chief of the General Staff and the Minister of National Defense. SSM aims to produce

¹²⁶ Makovsky, “The New Activism in Turkish Foreign Policy,” 3.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 4.

¹²⁸ “AboutSSM: Undersecretariat for Defence Industries”; Available [Online] <<http://www.ssm.gov.tr/aboutssm.htm>> [15 August 2000].

¹²⁹ Ibid.

defense items for domestic use to the maximum extent possible, export defense items and take advantage of state-of-the-art technology.

In the post-Cold War era Turkish officials became disappointed over the delay by or failure of the United States Congress and anti-Turkish Kurdish, Armenian and Greek lobbies to approve requested military hardware from its largest supplier due to human rights concerns and in the interest of maintaining a balance between Turkey and its neighbor, Greece. These obstacles have caused Turkey to look elsewhere to satisfy its defense needs. Given the influence of the Turkish military elites and the level of domestic and external threats, it is not surprising that its level of defense spending is high. In order to maintain a force of about 800,000 personnel, Turkey spent 5.7% of its gross domestic product on defense in 1999. This figure has risen steadily from that of 3.8% in the 1990-1994 timeframe.¹³⁰ Turkey has declared that it will invest \$150 billion in the next 25 years on defense modernization¹³¹ with its attack helicopter and main battle tank projects carrying high price tags.

Perhaps more noteworthy are the economic prospects of the deal. Indicators of the utility of such a relationship are a deal for \$630 million for Israel to upgrade 54 Turkish F4 fighters; Turkey's purchase of 200 Israeli-made Popeye air-to-ground missiles and plans for co-production of an upgraded Popeye II missile; and a contract for an Israeli-Singaporean consortium for \$60 million to upgrade 48 Turkish F-5

¹³⁰ NATO Press Release, "Financial and Economic Data Relating to NATO Defense", December 2, 1999.

¹³¹ Washington Institute for Near East Policy *Policywatch Bulletin* #292, "Israeli-Turkish Cooperation: Full Steam Ahead", 6 January 1998.

fighters.¹³² Other potential areas of defense industrial cooperation include large projects such as the \$800 million AWACS early warning aircraft, \$4.5 billion main battle tank, M-60 battle tank modernization and unmanned aerial vehicles for reconnaissance and electronic frontier security systems to protect Turkey's borders.¹³³

Turkey has been successful in undertaking a number of co-production ventures. One such venture is the "Peace Onyx" program, in which Lockheed Martin and Turkish Aerospace Industries (TAI) co-produce F16 combat aircraft for the Turkish air force in a factory on the outskirts of Ankara. This enterprise has also produced 40 F16 for Egypt. General Electric, Lockheed Martin, and Litton are all working with Turkish firms in producing various other components for the F16 such as aircraft engines, radar and electronic countermeasures equipment. Regarding land-based systems, the FMC Corporation has teamed up with the Turkish industry Nurol to produce U.S.-designed M-113 armored personnel carriers.¹³⁴

¹³² *Policywatch* #292, January 6, 1998.

¹³³ Pipes, 34.

¹³⁴ Tamar Gabelnick, William, D. Harung, and Jennifer Washburn, "Arming Repression: U.S. Arms Sales to Turkey during the Clinton Administration" (October 1999); Available [Online] <<http://www.fas.org/asmp/library/reports/turkeyrep.htm>> [20 May 2000].

III. THE DEVELOPMENT OF PROFESSIONALISM IN THE TURKISH MILITARY

A. MILITARY EDUCATION

1. Creating the Ideal Turk: Military High Schools and Service Academies

Military education in Turkey is an established institution inherited from the Ottoman era. In the nineteenth century Prussian officers were instrumental in modernizing the Ottoman military. Today the Turkish military education system for career officers consists of military high schools (*askeri liseler*); service officer academies (*harp okulları*) for land, naval and air forces; staff colleges for all three services (*harp akademileri*); the Armed Forces Academy (*Silahlı Kuvvetleri Akademisi*); and the National Security Academy (*Milli Güvenlik Akademisi*). The professional education of the average career officer begins at an early age and the standards for entry into the military education system are high. Although an individual can enter an officer academy from a civilian high school, the majority of officer candidates come from military high schools. Females, as well as males, are eligible for entry into the officer corps.

There are three military high schools for army students. They are Kuleli, located in Istanbul; Işıklar, located in Bursa; and Maltepe located in Izmir. Işıklar and Kuleli date back to the 1840s. Maltepe was established in 1928. The naval military high school is located on Heybeliada (Istanbul). There is no military high school for the air force. Future air force officers are drawn from the army's military high schools or civilian institutions.

In order to attain the level of expertise required of an officer capable of operating in today's security environment, an officer needs to spend about one-third of his career in school. The remaining time is spent in unit level assignments and on headquarters staffs. The standard career progression of a Turkish army officer is four years at the Army Officer Academy followed by one year of branch school. The officer then serves in unit assignments for eight years. At this point the officer has six chances to take the entrance examination for the staff college. If successful, the officer will attend a twenty-one week staff college preparatory course followed by two years at the staff college. Each service has its own staff college in Istanbul. Upon graduation the officer receives the designation of staff officer (*kurmay*) and returns to unit assignments for a minimum of two years. From there the officer attends the Armed Forces Academy for five months. Later on, when the officer achieves the rank of colonel or brigadier general, he will complete his military education at the National Security Academy.¹³⁵

Competition for entry into the military high schools and officer academies is high. This is because of the high regard in which the schools are held and the prospects of a quality education. Applicants are from all over the country, however, the urban areas are represented more heavily than the rural areas.¹³⁶

Applicants to a military academy¹³⁷ must be Turkish citizens who are not engaged, married or widowed and must not be living together with another man/woman.

¹³⁵ Turkish War Academies, *Kriteler (Criteria)*; Available [Online], <http://www.harpak.tsk.mil.tr> [16 August 2000].

¹³⁶ James Brown, "The Military and Society: The Turkish Case," *Middle Eastern Studies* 25, no. 3 (1989): 392-394.

¹³⁷ Data concerning entry into the Army War Academy (Officers Academy), its education objectives and curriculum are available [Online] <from <http://www.kho.edu.tr>> [26 July 2000].

The applicant, along with his father, mother and siblings, must not, through his/her attitudes and behavior, embrace any illegal political, subversive, reactionary or separatist ideological views. The applicant must be of impeccable integrity and character. The applicant must also undergo a background investigation, meet the health standards required by the academy and the education, age and height standards.

Once the applications have been accepted applicants must show up at (in this case the army) officer academy on an announced date and time in order to complete a questionnaire prior to an interview that assesses the applicant's speaking ability, tone of voice, ability to think creatively when under pressure and measures his/her degree of self-confidence and composure; check the applicant's physical appearance, height and weight; undergo a psychological examination, take a physical fitness test of speed, flexibility, strength and physical conditioning, and take a written test. The written test consists of 100 multiple-choice questions broken down as follows: mathematics (30), physics (20), chemistry (20) and Turkish (30). After passing all of the above-mentioned tests, the final score is determined by combining the results of the written test, 20% of the score on the University Student Selection Examination (ÖSS), and 10% of score on the Physical Fitness Test. Applicants are then rank ordered based upon their total scores. Once accepted into the academy, the academy reserves the right to disenroll a cadet who is not successful during the special adjustment training phase.

The Army officer academy aims at instilling in students a sense of duty and professional values related to the principles of a democratic, secular, social justice state in line with Atatürk's principles and reforms and Atatürk nationalism, while also possessing and characteristics of the national culture, customs and tradition. The students are also

instilled with a sense of national unity, solidarity, strengthened spirit and willpower. The academy provides contemporary scientific and technological education to meet the needs of the armed forces and the nation and prepare the student for graduate education. Upon graduation the cadet earns a degree encompassing the basic sciences, engineering and social sciences essential to a career officer so that he is able to train/manage the personnel under his command.

Future officers are indoctrinated with the principles of Kemalism. This emphasis has always been there since the Republic was formed, however, the degree to which it is taught has been a function of societal factors. For example, when the society is experiencing political polarization and military personnel are likely to be exposed to undesired political ideologies, more emphasis is given to Kemalism than when the domestic situation is more stable. Preston Hughes has demonstrated that the military leadership has stepped up efforts to educate its organization on Kemalism in times of crisis, primarily through the use of pamphlets and booklets with wide distribution. The military has refrained from referring to Kemalism as an ideology, mainly because it is then associated with all of the other “-isms” with which Turkish society was being confronted. The military refers to a Kemalist system of thought that is “dynamic” and can be applied to contemporary life. It is the job of the officer to internalize this system of thought. By grasping the Kemalist way of viewing the world, he is able to think analytically and solve problems in a scientific manner.¹³⁸

Given that Kemalism stresses secularism, religion plays little, if any, role

¹³⁸ Hughes, 159-188.

whatsoever in military socialization. In fact, a reliance on religion to substantiate anything is frowned upon. There is no evidence to point to the invocation of spiritual methods as a means of rallying the cadets around a common cause. For example, methods such as the use of U.S. military chaplains to perform functions like increasing esprit de corps at non-denominational services are non-existent. Any attempt to use religion in a political manner is viewed by the military as a threat to society as a whole and a threat to the professional values of the officer corps. Similarly, separatist views are equally discouraged because they endanger the idea of nationalism created by Atatürk.

It is important to examine the curriculum of an officers academy order to determine the degree of professionalism it has attained and how Kemalism has been sustained. I will use the army officer academy as a example. The army officer academy lasts four years, upon completion of which the graduate receives a Bachelor of Science degree in systems engineering. The first year courses are Mathematics I and II; Physics I and II; Chemistry I and II; Introduction to Behavioral Science; Turkish Language and Composition I and II; Marksmanship Training; Kemalism (Atatürkçülük) and Reform History I; Topography I and II; Directing Military Operations I; Technical Drawing; Foreign Language I and II and Computer Training I and II.

The second year courses include Linear Algebra; Differential Equations; Statistics I and II; Electric and Electronics I and II; Static and Dynamic; Introduction to Management; Introduction to Systems Science; Micro- and Macro-economics; Introduction to Law; Constitutional Law; Physical Science; Directing Military Operations II and III, Foreign Language III and IV; Thermodynamics; and Kemalism and Reform History II.

The third year courses include Information Management Systems; Engineering Economy; Organizational Theory; Problem Solving Techniques; Kemalism and Reform History III; Military Criminal Justice I; Quantitative Decision Making; Personnel Management; Product Management; Military Geography; Political History; Physical Science; Weapons Systems and Ballistics; Directing Military Operations V and VI; and Foreign Language V and VI; and Operations Research I.

The fourth year courses include Systems Simulation; Combat Mathematics Modeling; Operations Research II; Systems Concepts; War History I and II; Military Leadership; International Relations; Military Criminal Justice II; (Weapons) Fire Management; Directing Military Operations VII and VIII; Foreign Language VII and VIII; electives; and a final project.

The Kemalism and Reform History courses use a three-volume set of Atatürk's principles and reform history published by the Ministry of Education. Other documents used are Atatürk's famous speech (*Nutuk*) and his other speeches and statements (*Söylev ve Demeçleri*). The course teaches the Kemalist system of thought in its entirety and demonstrates how to embrace it as a way of life. By examining the formation and development of the Turkish Republic, cadets are able to grasp the Kemalist system of thought, which was formed in the Turkish Revolution, and transform their behavior. The military history courses cover the Balkan Wars, World War I, the Turkish War of Independence, World War II, the Korean War, the Arab-Israeli Wars, the Cyprus Peace Operation and the Gulf War.

Each service has a staff college.¹³⁹ The Army Staff College is the oldest with a founding date of 1848. It was followed by the Navy Staff College in 1863 and the Air Staff College in 1937. Entrance into the staff colleges is only possible by passing a comprehensive examination. The staff college for each service is two years in duration. The first year focuses on the tactical level: the brigade and division for army officers; the naval task group for naval officers and the tactical air force for air force officers. The second year focuses on the operational level: corps and field army for army officers, the naval task force for naval officers and the air force for air force officers. The focus of the Armed Forces Academy is joint and combined operations at the operational and strategic level. At the National Security Academy issues relating to national security are examined at the strategic level. The National Security Academy and the Armed Forces Academy were established in 1952 and 1953, respectively. High-level civilians also attend the National Security Academy.

Regarding promotions, the normal waiting time from second lieutenant to first lieutenant is three years; from first lieutenant to captain is six years; from captain to major is six years; from major to lieutenant colonel is five years; from lieutenant colonel to colonel is three years; and from colonel to general is five years. The waiting time between general ranks is four years. Promotions are dependent upon three factors: minimum time in present grade, a report and evaluation system, and position availability at the next grade. The last factor is particularly important. An officer, for example, even though eligible for promotion based on the factors of having the requisite time in grade and the required reports and evaluations, can not be advanced if there is no position

¹³⁹ Data on staff colleges available [Online] <http://www.harpak.tsk.mil.tr> [16 August 2000].

available at the next rank. Also, superior performance displayed by captains and majors may advance them a year earlier than their peers. This system applies not only to the army, navy and air force officers, but also to gendarmerie officers who are graduates of the Army Officer Academy.

The promotion criteria are that an individual has completed the minimum time in grade, has the requisite number of evaluation reports in grade, has completed tactical unit assignments according to the officer professional development program and there is a position available at the next grade. The average of the individual's evaluation reports for that rank will be determined. A prioritized list will be prepared based upon this information. When a position becomes available, the officer at the top of the list will be promoted and so on. For those unable to be promoted due to lack of positions at the next higher grade, they will be retired after a predetermined period of time according to their ranks.

In line with the reorganization of the Turkish Armed Forces from a division/regiment base to a brigade/battalion base, the number of officer positions was rearranged using operations research techniques. As a result of this work, colonel positions were reduced. It is evident that the promotion system is based on performance rather than merit, in the officer's ability to excel in school, work on a staff and perform at unit level.

Promotions and assignments of senior military personnel are determined annually at the Supreme Military Council, which is convened by the senior military leadership in August. (The council actually meets twice a year, however, personnel actions are determined in August.) Junior level personnel decisions are based upon the

recommendations of the individual service commanders. Prior to meeting, members of the council pay the customary visit to Atatürk's mausoleum. At the August 2000 ceremony Prime Minister Ecevit signed the honor book with the following sentence: "To the extraordinary and eternal leader Atatürk: I present the heartfelt feelings of gratitude and conscious devotion of the members of the Supreme Military Council."¹⁴⁰ The Prime Minister chairs the council, which consists of the Minister of Defense and four-star generals of all services. Senior level assignments such as Chief of the General Staff and service command positions are determined based upon seniority, but still require the approval of the president. Prior to reaching the position of Chief of the General Staff, the general normally serves as a field army commander and the land forces commander. Although not exclusively an army position by law, it has always been filled by an army officer. This annual event is followed closely in the press and all general assignments and promotions are listed when announced. The General Staff has also published the results of 1999 and 2000 on its official website.¹⁴¹ The Supreme Military Council provides the military a great deal of autonomy, both with respect to senior level and junior level personnel decisions.

The Supreme Military Council is also the forum for rendering decisions on the release of military personnel from service for separatist or Islamist reactionary activities. In contradistinction to the lack of interest of the civilian leadership in the infiltration of the civilian bureaucracy and internal security forces by Islamists, the military monitors these activities closely and discharges its personnel when they are found to be guilty.

¹⁴⁰ *Milliyet*, 2 August 2000.

¹⁴¹ See Turkish Armed Forces website; Available [Online] <<http://tsk.mil.tr>> [20 June 2000].

Numbers of officer/non-commissioned officers that were released in recent history are: 1996: 98; 1997: 307; 1998: 272; 1999: 58; 2000: 30.¹⁴²

Recently there has been a great degree of interest in the Turkish Armed Forces among the public. In 1999 the private television channel ATV aired a series entitled *Yıldızlar* (The Stars), which involved detailed tours of the army, navy and air force officer academies.¹⁴³ The most striking impression from the series was the degree of discipline that was instilled in the officer candidates as part of the military socialization process and the quality of the education being offered. Impressive displays of respect and discipline were shown. For example, at mealtime the cadets would rise when the senior officer entered the room and would be seated again on order. A word of thanks was offered up by one of the officer candidates and the food was distributed to all at the table by one of the cadets to show teamwork and selflessness. Also of interest were lessons in the classic dances such as the tango and waltz in which the cadets participated as part of the indoctrination. Emphasis was given to the modernity of the teaching facilities, computer laboratories and foreign language laboratories as well as extracurricular activities such as sailing and rowing for the naval cadets.

In 1986 investigative journalist Mehmet Ali Birand published a book about the Turkish military entitled *Emret Komutanım* which was later translated into English under the title *Shirts of Steel: An Anatomy of the Turkish Armed Forces*. Birand obtained the General Staff's approval before embarking upon his mission. He was able to observe officer education firsthand and interview military personnel. After Birand's work was

¹⁴² *Milliyet*, 1 August 2000.

¹⁴³ Ferda Balancar and Gül Abus Semerci, "Üniformının reytingi artıyor" ("The Ratings for those in

published, the General Staff took issue with some of his observations. Birand's reply was that he attempted to "confirm how the armed forces were seen through the eyes of a civilian."¹⁴⁴

In 1999 the Fine Arts Director of the Turkish Ministry of Culture Mehmet Özel produced a work volumes entitled *The Turkish Military (Türk Ordusu)*. The most important similarity between Özel's work k and that of Birand is that they point out the important place the Turkish Armed Forces have in the state structure as defined by law. In Birand's work, the author noted that emphasis was on the theoretical and not the practical level during the process of officer education. In *The Turkish Military* the author points out that the army officer academy introduced the Systems Engineering academic program eight years ago so that an officer would be able to solve the problems that confront him from an engineering perspective. Additionally, a Systems Sciences Institute was formed at the Army Officer Academy in order for officers to conduct graduate studies. Three years ago, an application known as "learn to learn" was introduced into the military high schools in order to develop critical thinking of the part of the students. A school was also opened for training managers, training experts and teachers. Expert personnel began to be sent to units for psychological counseling and leader counseling. Lastly, emphasis on simulations and simulators in education saves labor, time and money.¹⁴⁵

Uniform are Increasing"), *Aktüel* (20 May 1999): 13.

¹⁴⁴ Faruk Mercan, "Ordunun yeni yüzyıl vizyonu" ("The Military's Vision in the New Century"); Available [Online] <<http://www.zaman.com.tr/ssayfa/odosya/ordu.htm>> [21 August 2000].

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

All of these innovations highlight the high degree of professional education officers receive throughout their careers. Officer professional development is not stagnant within the Turkish military, but rather is a way of preparing officers for the challenges of the future. It has become the envy of the public as the standard for education in general. One of Birand's criticisms of the military education system when he wrote his book was the emphasis given to the military's traditional guardian role. He left one with the impression that the officer candidates were taught under which conditions they could intervene in politics. He also felt that the officers were too conservative in their views and were not exposed to enough liberal education.¹⁴⁶

What Birand perhaps failed to see is the disparity between the societal and functional imperatives in the military. Due to the functional imperative of defending the nation the leadership demands absolute obedience (*mutlak itaat*) of its personnel in the execution of its mission. The issue of individual rights so critical in the societal imperative of a liberal democracy does not come into play in the military. The military is by definition conservative due to the uniqueness of the profession. Although a broader – based education may help to bridge the gap between societal and functional imperatives, it should not involve the penetration of the state into the military realm, whereby its professionalism is affected.

2. The Question of Intervention

Given that the military has directly intervened on at least three occasions the question arises as to what the officer cadets learn about past interventions and under what

¹⁴⁶ Mehmet Ali Birand, *Shirts of Steel: An Anatomy of the Turkish Armed Forces* (London and New York: I.B. Taurus, 1991): 64-67.

conditions an intervention would be warranted in the future. The general consensus on past interventions was that the politicians had disregarded Atatürk's principles, which led to domestic violence and economic woe. Future occasions for intervention would be warranted when the conditions were again such that Atatürkism was in danger.¹⁴⁷

3. The Significance of Being *Kurmay*

Once officers reach the rank of captain, they become eligible for their respective service staff colleges. After passing an intense examination the officers spend two years in school. Only about 120-130 officers a year are admitted into the staff colleges. Graduates of the service staff colleges (*harp akademileri*) are considered the best of the Turkish officer corps. They are awarded the designation *kurmay* or staff officer, which means faster promotions, a higher salary and the opportunity to serve in choice assignments. Moreover, about "75 percent of those reaching the rank of general are staff officers."¹⁴⁸

B. WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM MY FRIENDS: U.S. SECURITY ASSISTANCE

1. Foreign Military Advice

Military advisers were supplied under the Truman Doctrine. Additionally U.S. military units in Turkey had frequent contact with their Turkish counterparts. The Turkish military formed itself along the lines of the American military and adopted many of its institutions. Various agencies like the Joint U.S. Military Mission for Aid to Turkey (JUSMMATT), which has become the Office of Defense Cooperation-Turkey

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 83-92.

(ODC-T), were instrumental in guiding modernization in the Turkish armed forces. To give an idea of the size of JUSMMATT at its peak in 1967, 5,000 military personnel and their dependents and 1,000 government civilians lived in Ankara at this time.¹⁴⁹

Today the impact of U.S. military advisers is everywhere. An army training and doctrine command known as EDOK, which mirrors the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) is located in Ankara. The United States and Turkey exchange liaison officers from the respective commands. EDOK has the responsibility of overseeing the various branch schools and training units for the army. It has a program of Battle Labs similar to those in operation in the United States for experimenting with training and doctrine innovations.¹⁵⁰

Turkey's experience in Somalia and its long battle with the PKK have led to the introduction of psychological operations forces in the military as a combat multiplier. They have even established special forces units modeled on those of the United States.

Turkish military personnel attending school under the International Military Education Program (IMET) bring the skills that they have learned back to Turkey for possible inclusion into their military. In fact, one major source of officer professional development within the Turkish armed forces has been the opportunity to attend school in the United States. From 1950 to 1999, 23,297 Turkish personnel have benefited from the IMET program. Other forms of professional development have been made possible for

¹⁴⁸ Metz, *Turkey: A Country Study*, 333.

¹⁴⁹ Clifford A. Bernath, "JUSMMATT and Turkey: History and Overview," *DISAM Journal* 7, no. 4 (1985): 6.

¹⁵⁰ See EDOK website; Available [Online] <<http://www.kkk.tsk.mil.tr/webaktar/edok>> [29 July 2000].

Turkish officers. The Washington Institute for Near East Policy sponsors Turkish officers (and academics) to come to the United States on security-related research fellowships.¹⁵¹

2. Security Assistance to Support Modernization

The United States has been the major supplier of defense equipment to Turkey in the post-war era, much of it in the form of grant. In fact, between “1950 and 1991, the United States provided military assistance valued at US\$94 billion, of which about US\$6.1 billion was in grant form and US\$3.3 billion was on a concessional loan basis.”¹⁵² Even though the arms embargo the United States enforced upon Turkey in 1975 as a result of its intervention on Cyprus was a severe blow to Turkish-American relations, Turkish military leaders are still firm believers in the quality of U.S. equipment.

Transfer of U.S. defense equipment occurs by means of a number of programs. Turkey has been able to take advantages of grant aid, foreign military sales (FMS) credits, excess defense articles and “has been a prime beneficiary of surplus U.S. weapons deliveries, both under the Pentagon’s Excess Defense Articles (EDA) program and through the process of “cascading” weapons that the U.S. took out of service to meet its commitments under the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty.”¹⁵³ Through

¹⁵¹ See Washington Institute for Near East Policy website; Available [Online] <<http://www.washingtoninstitute.org>> [16 July 2000].

¹⁵² Metz, 351.

¹⁵³ Tamar Gabelnick, William D. Hartung, and Jennifer Washburn, “Arming Repression: U.S. Arms Sales to Turkey during the Clinton Administration,” October 1999; Available [Online] <<http://www.fas.org/asmp/library/reports/turkeyrep.htm>> [20 May 2000].

EDA and the cascading process Turkey was able to assemble an impressive array of tanks, armored personnel carriers, combat aircraft, helicopters and ships.¹⁵⁴

C. TURKEY'S PARTICIPATION IN NATO

1. Turkish Commanders of NATO Headquarters

Turkish military personnel occupy positions throughout the NATO alliance. The highest position held by a Turkish officer at an operational NATO headquarters is the commander of Headquarters, Joint Command Southeast (JCSE), formerly known as Headquarters, LANDSOUTHEAST, in Izmir, Turkey. The position is a four-star billet and, although formerly not considered as prestigious as a service command within the Turkish armed forces is rapidly becoming a prerequisite for the position of chief of the general staff. As of August 2000, the Chief of the General Staff, his deputy and the land forces commander (recognized as the springboard to the chief of the general staff position) are all filled by former NATO commanders. This fact lends credence to the importance previous NATO assignments are playing in the placement of high-level military officers. Additionally, officers with previous NATO experience man key staff positions at the General Staff and service staffs. The professionalism of the military is increased in that these officers have a broader worldview, speak English and are familiar with working in a multinational environment. They are also used to working with military forces in which civilian supremacy is institutionalized. The flip side of this is that they can become more easily frustrated with the relative weakness of their political

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

institutions and the resolve on the part of some of the population to inhibit progress, thus leading to the tendency to intervene in politics.

2. The Importance of NATO Assignments to Officer Professional Development

When Turkey first joined NATO a generational cleavage developed between the senior and the junior officers. The senior officers preferred the status quo because they were not reared in a world of technological change. The junior officers were able to experience change firsthand by observing other militaries in the alliance and became aware of the shortcomings of their own armed forces. Almost fifty years later this cleavage no longer exists. Senior military officers are as accustomed to the technological advances offered by the West as the junior officers and seek to incorporate innovation into the Turkish system. This has led to a higher degree of professionalism and more cohesion within the military. NATO has, to a certain extent, been a means of international military socialization. By this is meant that Turkish officers have been exposed to established democracies in which the military does not play a significant political role and is concerned with institutional autonomy and professionalism. Although it has reluctantly entered politics to preserve the Kemalist ideology, the Turkish military has retreated to the barracks once adjustments have been made. Turkey's strong military tradition, coupled with the high standards set by NATO, has given the military a high degree of professional competence.

3. Turkish Involvement in Peacekeeping Operations and Regional Security Initiatives

The Turkish military has been recently deployed on a number of peacekeeping operations. In addition to UN observer missions, it has provided a brigade task force to support enforcement of the Dayton Accords in Bosnia. It provided approximately 850 personnel in support of OPERATION ALBA in Albania and currently has a battalion task force in Kosovo as part of the Kosovo force (KFOR). Its first large scale deployment under UN auspices since the Korean War was to Somalia, during which it also supplied the commander of UNOSOM II forces. These operations have been instrumental in shaping the professional development of the Turkish officer corps once again by exposing it to a variety of other militaries.

Additionally, the military, which has considerable influence in foreign policy was key to establishing regional security initiatives like the southeastern Europe brigade (SEEBRIG) and the Black Sea Naval (BLACKSEAFOR). These initiatives were partially to avoid marginalization by the West since Turkey perceived that it was being excluded from European security. Turkish military ties with Israel increased enormously over the last five years. In the area of military training and cooperation, Turkey has bilateral agreements with over thirty countries. In 1998, it opened a Partnership for Peace Training Center in Ankara to train foreign officers and high-ranking civilians in areas pertaining to NATO operations. All of these initiatives demonstrate the professionalism displayed by the senior leadership in finding a place for Turkey in the new security environment. This increased professionalism is in line with its Kemalist ideology of identifying and integrating with the West.

D. THE MODERNIZATION EFFORT

1. Reorganization

The Turkish armed forces underwent a major reorganization in the early 1990s. For instance, the army went from a division/regiment base to a brigade/battalion base. It currently is organized in 4 armies, 10 corps, 2 mechanized infantry division headquarters, 3 light infantry and one training division, 15 mechanized infantry brigades, 16 armored brigades, 11 infantry/commando brigades, a training and doctrine command and a logistics command. The intent of the reorganization was to increase the flexibility of the army force to meet security challenges. Some of the impetus for this change was the observations surrounding the Turkish military readiness posture during the Gulf War.

The armed forces understand their mission in the post-Cold War security environment to be defense of Turkey from external and internal threats within the framework of the duties it is responsible for under the Constitution and laws. In addition to classic war, the armed forces will be prepared for the following operations: peace support, anti-terrorism, crisis management, humanitarian assistance, disaster relief and limited use of force.¹⁵⁵ In response to the 1999 earthquake that took its toll in Turkey's Marmara region, the military has activated a battalion-sized force known as the Turkish Armed Forces Natural Disaster Search and Rescue Battalion responsible for disaster relief operations.¹⁵⁶ Another reorganization initiative has been the relief of the gendarmerie from the security and maintenance of the Turkey's land borders. In 1988 this mission was given to the land forces with the exception that Turkey's common

¹⁵⁵ See Turkish General Staff website; Available [Online] <www.tsk.mil.tr> [20 August 2000].

border with Iran and a portion of its border with Syria would still be under the control of the gendarmerie. Gendarmerie units, along with a portion of the armed forces, have been preoccupied with combating the PKK since 1984.

2. Equipment Modernization

The Turkish military is undergoing a major modernization effort aimed at bringing the armed forces solidly into the 21st century. The cost of this effort is estimated to be about US\$50 million over the next 25 years. Two major programs are the main battle tank program and the attack helicopter program. Turkey has sought to diversify its sources of external procurement based upon its experience with an U.S. arms embargo in the 1970s. The military is aiming to downsize the force and take advantage of technology to increase its capabilities.

3. Establishment of a Domestic Defense Industry

Of mention in the domestic defense industry is the relationship of the military elite to business and whether this relationship causes military intervention in politics. Gerassimos Karabelias asserts that the Turkish military is closely linked to industry and that their "economic activities have assisted not only in increasing the degree of the political and financial autonomy of the officer corps from the civilian government but also in developing closer, direct ties between the military establishment and leading industrialists both in Turkey (e.g. Koç, Eczacıbaşı and Sabancı Holdings) as well as

¹⁵⁶ Turkish General Staff Press Announcement #64, 29 May 2000.

abroad (e.g. American, German, French, Israeli and Russian military and high-tech companies).¹⁵⁷

4. Reform within the Armed Forces

The armed forces have actively attempted to reform their organization for efficiency. Indicators of this are the emphasis being placed on keeping up with the information age and the weight given to the sciences in the military schools. Other indicators are a revamp of the promotion system in which less subjectivity in evaluation reports will exist. Training in respect for human rights for personnel being assigned to the southeast has shown that the military is making an effort to improve itself in this area. Serious consideration is being given to the possibility of a professional military in Turkey, i.e., the elimination of conscription in favor of contract soldiers, however, the current assessment of the general staff is that the scope of the defense mission of combating external and internal threats warrants the retention of the current mixed system for now.

¹⁵⁷ Gerassimos Karabelias, "The Evolution of Civil-Military Relations in Post-war Turkey, 1980-95," *Middle Eastern Studies* 35, no. 4 (1999):

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IV. CONCLUSION

The Turkish officer corps has developed into a highly professional organization as a result of the expertise, responsibility and corporateness it has possessed since the founding of the Republic in 1923. Modernization efforts since World War II and Turkey's participation in NATO have increased its level of professionalism. However, professionalism has not been maximized because of the officer corps reliance on Kemalism as a component of this professionalism will undermine attempts to achieve objective civilian control.

Only with a discontinuation of Kemalism as the driving force behind military professionalism can civilian supremacy be achieved. This does not mean that the legacy of Atatürk as an outstanding military leader should not be perpetuated as part of the Turkish military tradition. It means that Kemalism should be discontinued as a system of belief within the officer corps.

Atatürk left the officer corps with an ambiguous legacy: to defend the country from internal and external threats and to guard the nation's ideals. He bequeathed the continuation of a revolution from above, which continues to meet resistance from certain elements of society. The latter task necessitates military involvement in political affairs. In the post-Cold War security environment, Western industrial democracies and Western organizations are critical of excessive military influence in politics and, in the case of the EU have tied resolution of this issue in the Turkish case to membership.

Military professionalism in the Turkish officer corps is burdened by the Kemalist ideology, causes continued intervention of the military in politics and resistance to objective civilian control. It is sustained through the military education system and is visible in all aspects of civil-military relations. Objective civilian control in Turkey can only be achieved by maintaining an officer corps that emulates Kemal Atatürk as a leader, but does not adhere to Kemalism as an ideology.

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